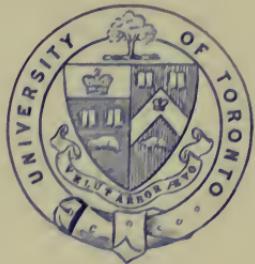
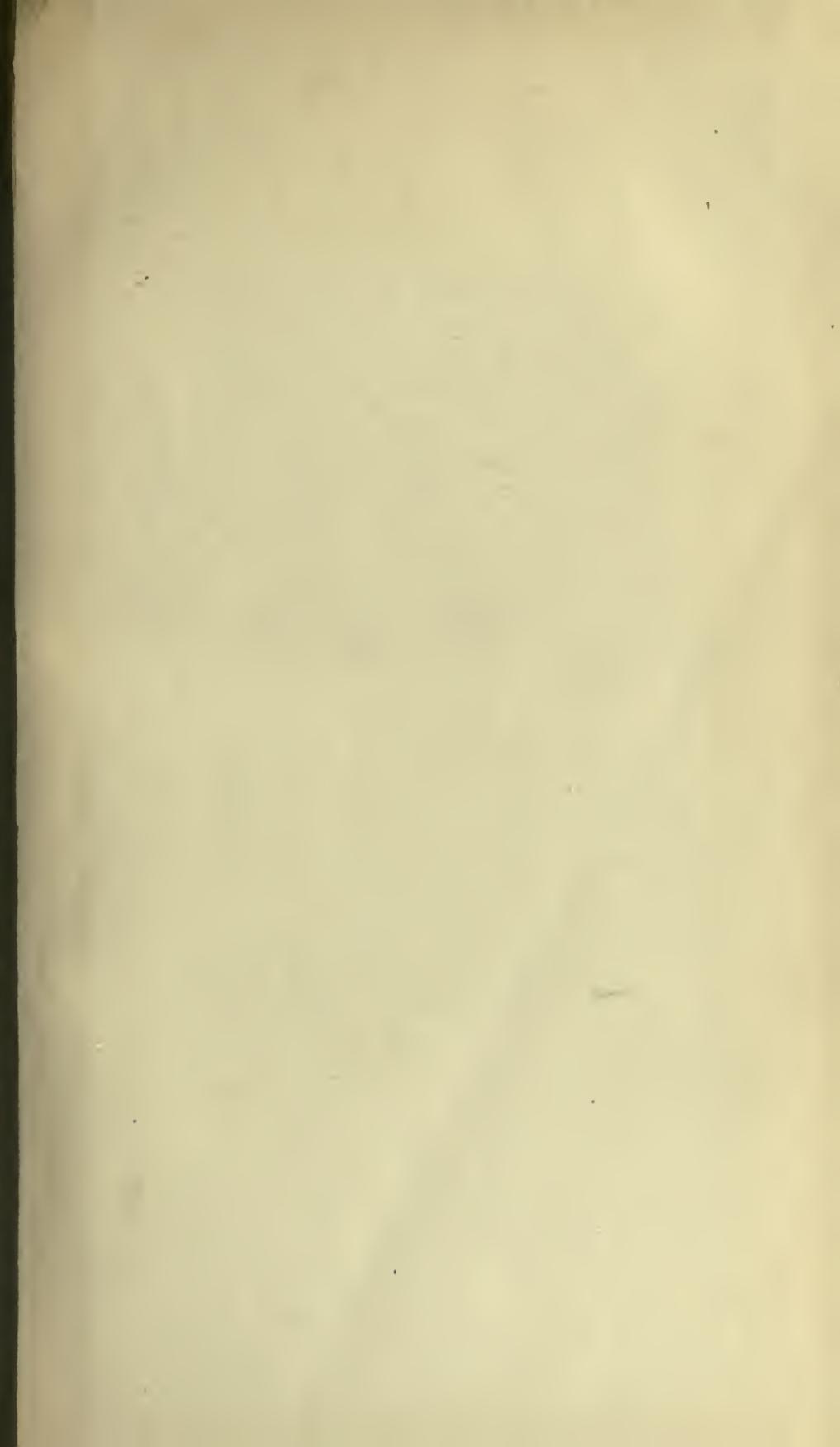


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On Stone by T. J. Rawlins from a Sketch by Capt. C. R. Scoll.

R. Martin Uthog, 26, Long Acre.

THE GENERALIFE, PALACE AND VALLEY OF THE DARRO.
FROM A WINDOW IN THE ALHAMBRA.

Published by Henry Colburn, 13, G^o Marlborough St.

HSP
54253e

EXCURSIONS
IN THE
MOUNTAINS
OF
RONDA AND GRANADA,

WITH CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES
OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE SOUTH OF SPAIN.

BY
CAPTAIN C. ROCHFORT SCOTT,

AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN EGYPT AND CANDIA."

"*Aqui hermano Sancho, podemos meter las manos
hasta los codos, en esto que llaman aventuras.*"
DON QUIJOTE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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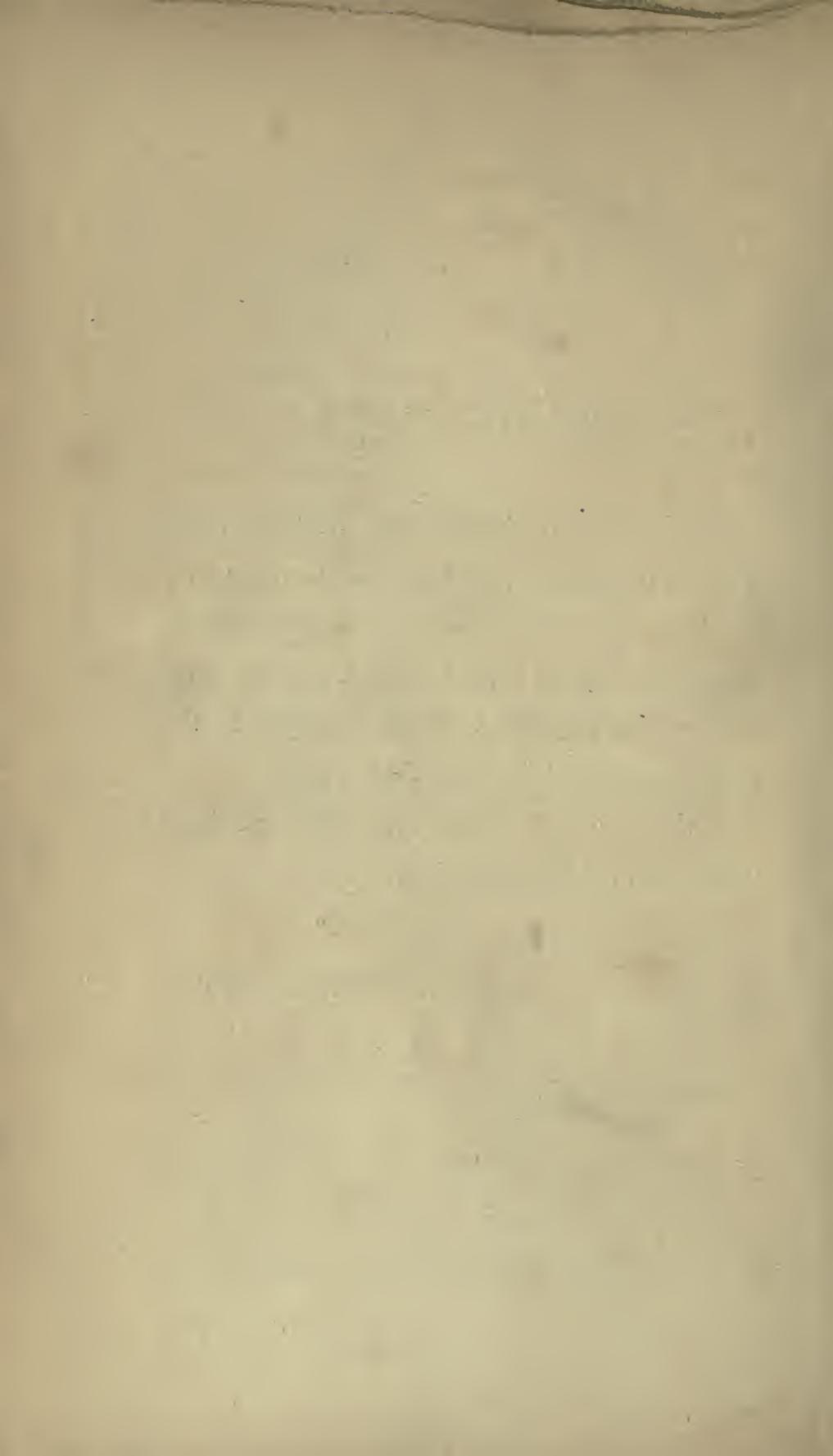
To the Valued Friends who witnessed, and whom a congeniality of taste led to *enjoy* with me, the scenes herein described—whose wearied limbs have sought repose upon the same hard floor — whose spoons have been dipped in the same *Gazpacho*, I dedicate these pages.

In the course of our perigrinations we have often observed to each other,

“ *Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*”

C. ROCHFORT SCOTT.

Woolwich, 26th October.



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E R R A T A.

VOLUME I.

Page 27, line 20, for *far more*, read *few*.
Page 151, line 18, for *lightly*, read *slightly*.
Page 161, line 30, for *Aguagils*, read *Aguazils*.
Page 190, line 28, for *Higa*, read *Hija*.
Page 213, line 2, for *nuevos*, read *huevos*.
Page 216, line 14, for *Cachuca*, read *Cachucha*.
Page 370, line 14, for *Higo*, read *Hijo*.
Page 402, line 14, for *Valga mi*, read *Valgame*.
Page 433, line 1, for *emboyo*, read *embozo*.

VOLUME II.

Page 171, line 26, for *surveyors*, read *purveyors*.
Page 271, line 8, for *suda*, read *sua*.
Page 288, line 28, for *provechosos*, read *provechosas*.
Page 432, line 16, for *hagged*, read *haggard*.

EXCURSIONS
IN THE
MOUNTAINS
OF
RONDA AND GRANADA.

PREFATORY CHAPTER.

CONTAINING LITTLE MORE THAN AN INVOCATION—A DISSERTATION—
A CHOICE OF MISERIES—A BILL OF FARE—AND A RECEIPT FOR
MAKING A FAVOURITE SPANISH DISH.

SPAIN ! region of romance ! of snow-capped mountains, dark forests, and crystal streams ! —Land of the olive and the vine—the perfumed orange and bright pomegranate !—Country of portly priests, fierce bandits, and dark-eyed donzelllas—the lively castañet and gay Fandango ! And thou, fair Bœtica ! favoured province of a favoured clime, whose purple grape

tempted Hercules to arrest his course — whose waving corn-fields and embowelled treasures have ever since excited the cupidity of the various ambitious nations that have in turn disputed the empire of the world ! Is it indeed true that ye are “ now chiefly interesting to the traveller for the monuments which a foreign and odious race of conquerors have left behind them ? ” * Yes, you might proudly answer, we admit such is the case. Spain is chiefly interesting to the stranger on account of the monuments left by her turbaned conquerors ; but she is so simply, because, in no other country, are they to be seen in so perfect a state ; because, in no other part of the world subjected to Moslem sway, did the arts ever reach to such perfection.

But, whilst Spain lays especial claim to the attention of the stranger on account of the relics of the Moors that are strewed over her surface, she possesses, in common with other countries of Southern Europe, the usual attractions that excite the interest of travellers. Can she not boast of owning monuments of the demi-god Hercules, † and other conquerors of

* Hallam.—Europe during the Middle Ages.

† The causeway that connects the city of Cadiz with the Isla de Leon is said to be a *fragment* of a work undertaken by Hercules ; the castle of Santi Pétri (built on a rocky island about five miles to the east of the city) to be constructed from the ruins of a temple built by

the most remote antiquity? Are not her shores studded with ruins of the Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Romans? Has she not noble works of art of yet more recent times than her Moorish palaces to boast of? May she not proudly point to the splendid gothic edifices raised since her release from the Mussulman yoke? to the incomparable paintings of the divine Murillo? to the statuary of a Cano? Is not the Spanish peninsula one of the most beautiful as well as richest countries in the world?

Such is the answer that Spain and her beauteous daughter, Boetica, might make to the accusation which the words of the accomplished Author I have quoted may be construed to bear. I will venture to add further, that Spain, in her present fallen state, excites, perhaps, yet more intensely, the curiosity and interest of the Traveller, than she could have done even in the days of her greatest glory: for, the contemplation of the wreck of such an Empire—an Empire “on whose wide dominions the sun never set;” whose resources were deemed inexhaustible—cannot but be highly interesting and instructive.

At every step the stranger takes whilst wan-

that celebrated hero, and in which his bones were deposited.—Traces of this temple may be seen at low water, near the mouth of the San Pedro river.

dering over Spain's neglected though still fertile plains, some trace is observable of her former wealth and power, some proof is manifest of her present poverty and impotence. Let him cast a glance at the ruins of the magnificent arsenals of Cadiz, Vigo, and Barcelona*—let him mark the closed door of the Tower of Gold,† at Seville—let him observe the use to which the sumptuous *Lonja*‡ has been converted—the dilapidated condition of the gorgeous palace of Charles the Fifth. Let him notice the crumbling state of all the public buildings throughout the kingdom, even to the actual residences of its monarch—track the remains of once magnificent roads—explore the deep recesses of abandoned mines. Let him, in fine, observe the commerce of the country destroyed, its manufactures ruined, its Army disorganized, and its Treasury penniless; and, whilst he learns what Spain *has been*, he will see to what a lamentable state she is reduced.

Nor to the Traveller alone is the contemplation of Spain, in her fallen greatness, a source of interest and instruction. The Philosopher, the

* That of Cadiz is literally a ruin.

† The *Torre del Oro*, in which the precious metals brought from Mexico were formerly deposited.

‡ The *Lonja* was built (as the word in fact implies) for an exchange, but, from the fallen state of Spanish commerce, it is now used as a dépôt for the American Archives.

Statesman, the Philanthropist, and the *Patriot*, may all draw from it serious matter for reflection. Who amongst them could have foreseen, but half a century back, that Spain would, in the course of a few years, be reduced to her present abject condition? Who can *now* foresee the day that, phœnix-like, she may arise from her ashes? Who can fully answer the yet more simple questions—What *led* to the downfall of Spain? What keeps her—gifted as she is by nature with all the germs of prosperity—in her present state of degradation? Did the extraordinary influx of the precious ores, consequent on the discovery of America, occasion her gradual downfall? Did the impolitic expulsion of the Jews and Moors from her territory lead to it? Does the blighting influence of Popery reply to the two-fold query? Does the vacillating rule of Despotism solve the problem?

All, probably, have had a share in effecting this lamentable change. The great influx of money led to the neglect of the resources of Spain herself, and induced habits of indolence in all classes of society. The expulsion of the Jews deprived the country of its principal capitalists—that of the Moors, of its most industrious inhabitants. The bigotry and intolerance of its Church have kept its

population in ignorance, whilst most other nations of Europe have become enlightened. The numerous religious houses, endowed with the richest lands in the country, and swarming with unprofitable inmates, have preyed upon its resources. The rule of a weak and bigoted race of sovereigns — themselves governed in turn by profligate favourites and ambitious priests — has sapped the monarchy to its foundation ; finally, the crude and hasty innovations of wild theorists are undermining its remaining strength, and preparing to effect its utter downfall.

But, whilst many of these causes still operate most fatally in keeping the country in its present state of degradation, the last named is that which is likely to inflict upon it the greatest amount of *misery*. Catholicism—such as it is in Spain at least—is incompatible with free institutions ; and Catholicism has too firm a hold of the *mass* of the Spanish people to be easily eradicated.

Atheism, it is true, has made great progress in some quarters ; and between it and Popery lies the contest now carrying on.

Many persons are apt to think that the struggle is between *Superstition* and “*liberal Catholicism*”—between a Despotism and a limited Monarchy. But those who know Spain

intimately, are aware that such is far from being the case ; they know, on the contrary, that the contest must end (*when* it would be difficult to say) either in the restoration of an absolute throne, or the establishment of a Democratic Republic.

The limited Monarchy Party — or *Moderados* — though the most respectable in talents, consists but of a few educated Nobles, and a small portion of the Mercantile and learned Professions — some few even of the clergy ; but amongst the mass of the people it has no supporters whatever ; for amongst the lower orders the term is not understood.

The leaders of this party — like the *Gironde* in France — were carried away by the breakers of reform, as they swept onwards with increasing volume ; and the unprincipled men who have since usurped the direction of affairs, — with all the vanity of a Mirabeau, but without one spark of his talents, — imagine they shall be listened to, when they bid the flowing tide to advance no further : — but, though they would not object to, nay, though they *desire*, the establishment of a Republic, yet they too will find Spanish Robespierres and Talliens to dispute their power.

To others, however, I abandon the wide field of inquiry these questions open ; the following

pages, whatever glimmerings of light they may throw upon the subject, being devoted to the description of but a small portion of this ill used, ill governed, but most interesting country.

The part I have selected—namely, Andalusia—whilst it differs very materially from the rest of the Spanish peninsula, claims in many respects the first place in the estimation of the traveller, whatever may be his *taste* or the direction of his inquiries.

If the Moorish monuments be the object of his research, he will find they have been scattered with a more profuse hand throughout Andalusia than in any other part of the peninsula ; the lofty mountain chain which forms the northern boundary of the province* having for some considerable time arrested the Christian arms, after the rest of Spain had been recovered from the Mohammedans ; whilst the yet more rugged belt that encircles Granada presented an obstacle which retarded the entire reconquest of the kingdom, for upwards of two centuries and a half. During that long period, therefore, the Moslems, driven within the limits of so diminished a circle, were necessarily obliged to enlarge and multiply their towns, to cultivate with greater care their fields and orchards, and

* The Province of Andalusia comprises, strictly speaking, only the three kingdoms of Seville, Cordoba, and Jaen ; but that of Granada is generally included by modern Geographers.

to strengthen, in every possible way, the natural defences of their territory ; and thus, their remains, besides being more numerous *there* than in other parts of Spain, furnish specimens, of the latest as well as of the earliest date, of their peculiar style of architecture.

Should matters of more general interest have drawn the Traveller to Spain, he will still find Andalusia laying especial claim to his attention ; History ascribing to each mountain pass and every crumbling ruin the fame of having been the scene of some desperate conflict between the various ambitious nations that, before the Saracenic invasion, successively sought the possession of this fertile region.

The peculiar manners and character of its dark inhabitants afford yet another source of interest to the Stranger ; although the swarthy race may almost claim to be classed amongst its *Arabic remains* ; for so deep-rooted was the attachment of the Moors of Granada to the country of their adoption, that neither the oppressive tyranny of their masters, nor the sacrifice of their religion, nay, not even the establishment of the “*holy*” inquisition, (which extirpated them by thousands) could induce them to abandon it. Broken in spirit, re-plunged in ignorance, their industry unavailing, their language corrupted, they bent the knee to

the blood-stained cross presented to them, and assumed the name of Spaniards: but as a Spanish nobleman once observed to me in speaking of these wild mountaineers, his dependants, “They are to this day but Moors who go to Mass.”

Again, should the beauties of nature have attracted the Traveller’s footsteps to Spain, he will find the scenery of Andalusia of the most magnificent and varied kind; presenting alternately ranges of lofty mountains and broad fertile plains—boundless tracts of forest and richly cultivated valleys—picturesque towns and mountain fortresses—winding rivers and impetuous torrents. It may indeed be said to combine the wild beauties of the Tyrol with the luxuriant vegetation and delightful climate of Southern Italy.

Well might the last of the Alhamares* weep, on taking his final leave of the lovely *Vega*,† over which it had been his fortune to be born the ruler, whence it was his “luckless” fate to be driven forth, a wanderer! Even to this day, the Moors of Barbary preserve the title-deeds and charters by which their ancestors held

* The kingdom of Granada was founded by Mohammed Abou Said, of the family of Alhamares, A.D. 1236.

† The Vale of Granada is, *par excellence*, termed *La Vega*. *Vega* signifies a plain.

their estates in Spain, and offer up daily prayers to *Allah*, to restore to them their lost Granada ; and one might almost suppose, from the nomadic life still led by many of their tribes, and the unsettled habits which distinguish them all, that they consider their actual country as but a temporary abode, and live in the hope and expectation that their oft-repeated prayer will eventually be heard.

Nor is the present inhabitant of this fair region less sensible than his Moorish ancestor of the value of his inheritance. It is not in his nature to express himself in the passionate language of the Neapolitan,—whose well known exclamation, *Vedi Napoli e poi mori!* might be applied with better reason to a hundred other places ;—but, with an equal degree of hyperbole though a somewhat less suicidal feeling, the *Granadino* declares with calm dignity, that

“ *Quien no ha visto à Granada
No ha visto nada.*”*

But, apart from all other considerations, there is a charm in travelling in Spain, which renders it peculiarly attractive to most persons possessing the locomotive mania, namely, the charm of *novelty*. Every thing in that country is different from what is met with in any other ;

* He who has not seen Granada—has seen *nothing*.

every thing is proverbially *uncertain* ;* and the traveller is thus kept in a constant state of excitement, from his fancy being ever busy guessing what is to come next.

There can be little doubt but that the uncertainty attendant on all mundane affairs greatly enhances our enjoyment of life. Take the duration of our existence itself as an instance : did we know the precise moment at which it was to terminate, we should be miserable during the whole period of its continuance. So, in like manner, does the uncertainty attendant on such trifling matters as getting a bed or a supper give a peculiar zest to *touring* in Spain. You have there no “ *Itineraire des Voyageurs*,” to mark the spot to a *millimetre*, where a relay of post-horses is to be found ; no “ *Hand-book for Travellers*,” with a list of the best inns on the road, to spoil your appetite by anticipation ; no dear pains-taking Mrs. Starke,† to beat up quarters and sights for you, and determine

* *Cosas de España!* is a common mode of expressing the uncertainty of every thing connected with Spain. “ *Affairs of Spain*. ”

† Far be it from me to disparage the information or undervalue the exertions of this most estimable lady, to turn the precious time of my *all-seeing* countrymen to the best account : on the contrary, I can with perfect truth and from much personal experience say, that I never met with a better General Itinerary than that she has given to the public : and though, as regards Spain, the amount of information is scanty, yet it is nevertheless far more correct than that contained in works I have met with, devoted exclusively to the description of that country.

beforehand the sum you have (or rather ought) to pay for bed and “*pasto*.” No — you travel with a bad map of the country in your pocket over a stony track that is *not* marked upon it — and which you are at times disposed to believe is rather the bed of a torrent than a road. Before you is the prospect of passing the night on this villainous king’s highway ; or, should you be fortunate enough to reach the shelter of a roof, the doubt, whether a comfortable bed, a truss of straw, or a hard floor, will receive your wearied limbs ; and whether you will have to go supperless to bed, or find a savoury *olla*, perfuming the whole establishment.

It must, I think, be admitted, that there is a certain charm in this independent mode of travelling—this precarious manner of existence. It carries the wanderer back to the days of chivalry and romance — of the *Cid Campeador* and *Bernardo del Carpio* ; dropping him at least half a dozen centuries behind the Liverpool and Manchester Railroad.

Nevertheless,—as the Spaniards say — *Hay gustos que merecen palos* ;* and many will perchance think that *mine* is in that predicament, a settled order of things being more to their fancy : — *par exemple*, the five mile an hour clattering *en poste* over a French *pavé* — all

* There are tastes which deserve a stick.

conversation drowned in the horrible noise made by the heavy horses' heavy tramp, or the yet more abominable clacking of their monkey jacketed driver's whips.—Then the certain comforts of a *grand Hotel meublé!*— the spacious whitewashed room, adorned with prints of Arcola, Jena, and Friedland ! (which I have always thought would look much better if worked in the pattern of a carpet): the classically canopied bed !—that certainly would not be less comfortable, if a foot or two longer.—Others again may be found who would give up the charm of uncertainty, for the fixed pleasure of sitting behind the pipes and “*sacraments*” of German postboys, listening to the discordant notes of their bugles, and looking forward to the sudorific enjoyments (stoves and duvets) of the *Gasthof*, and the dyspeptic delights (grease and *sauerkraut*) of its *Speisesaal*!— Some even—but these I trust are few— may like to listen to the melodiously rounded oaths of an Italian *vetturino*, addressed to his attenuated horses in all the purity of the *Lingua Toscana*; by dint of which, and an unceasing accompaniment of merciless *sferzatone*, he provokes the wretched animals into a jog-trot, that, with *rinfresco* and *rinforzo*, kills the whole day and them by inches, to get over a distance of forty or fifty miles.

For my own part, I freely confess, that not

even our English modes of “getting over the ground” have such charms for me, as the tripping and stumbling of one’s horse over a Spanish *trocha**—I take no delight in being dragged through the country at the rate of a mile a minute, powdered with soot, (pardon the bull) suffocated with steam, and sickened with grease. Neither does our steady ten mile an hour stage-coach travelling find much favour in mine eyes; though I grant it is now most admirably conducted, the *comforts* of the old “slow coaches” being so happily blended with the accelerated *speed* called for in this progressive age, that a change of horses is effected in less than one minute, and a feed of passengers in something under ten!—But I always pity the victims of this unwholesome alliance of comfort and celerity.—Observe that fidgety old gentleman, muzzled in a red worsted *comforter*, and crowned with a Welsh wig. Having started without breakfast, or at most with but half of one, he counts impatiently the minutes and milestones that intervene between him and the dining-place; arrived there, if five minutes before the appointed time, every thing is underdone; if five minutes after, a deduction of equal amount is made in the time allowed for despatching the viands. Swallowing, therefore, in

* A mountain road.

all haste the indigestible roast pork and par-boiled potatoes that are placed before him, he resumes his seat in or upon the vehicle, declaring—whilst the unwholesome food sticking in his throat nearly chokes him—that he “*feels all the better*” for his *dinner*! soon after which, with a flushed face and quickened pulse, he drops into a feverish slumber, dreaming of mad bulls and carnivorous swine, sloe juice and patent brandy.

Towards midnight, the announcement of “a quarter of an hour, gentlemen” (meaning something less than half that time), relieves him from these painful reminiscences, affording an opportunity of washing them down with some scalding liquid, which, though bearing the name of tea or coffee, is a decoction of some deleterious plant or berry, that certainly never basked under the sun of China or Arabia Felix.

At last, however, he arrives at the end of his long journey—he has got over a distance of a hundred and ninety-five miles in nineteen hours and thirty-five minutes! The hour of arrival is inconveniently early it is true, but, even at 3 o’clock A.M., he finds a comfortable hotel open to receive him; an officious “boots” sufficiently master of his drowsy senses to present the well or rather the ill-used slippers—a smirking chambermaid sufficiently *awake* to make him

believe that the *warming-pan*, with which she precedes him up three pair of stairs, contains *hot* coals; and impudent enough, whilst presenting him with a damp, once white, cotton nightcap, to ask at what o'clock he would *like* to be awakened—she well knowing, all the time, that the stir of passengers about to depart by an early coach will to a certainty effect that object for him in the course of an hour, whether he *likes* it or not.

These rapid proceedings have, as I before confessed, no charms for me, and such as cannot dispense with the comforts I have slightly sketched, must abstain from travelling in Spain, for very different is the entertainment they are likely to meet with at an Andalusian *posada*.* *There*, in the matters of “Boots,” Hostler, and Chambermaid, no uncertainty whatever exists, and the traveller must therefore be prepared to divide with his attendant the several duties of those useful personages. Nor should he, amidst his multifarious occupations, neglect the cooking

* It may be as well, ere I start on my travels, to explain that there are three words in Spanish by which houses of entertainment are designated, exclusive of *Parador*, which may be considered a generic term, implying a *place to stop at*.—The first in rank is the *Fonda*, whereat travellers are furnished with board and lodging, but which does not extend its accommodation to horses. Next comes the *Posada*, which accommodates man and beast, but does not always profess to supply nourishment to either.—The *Venta* is a kind of roadside public house, where bad accommodation, and whatever else the place contains, may be had for money.

department; for, if he have not an *arriero** power of consuming oil and garlic, he must watch with vigilant eye, and restrain with persuasive words, the too bountiful hand of Our Lady of the *Olla*.†

It is to be understood that I speak here of the South of Spain only, and more especially of the mountainous country encircling the fortress of Gibraltar,—from whence, in due time, I purpose taking my departure.

I ought here perhaps to give notice, that it is not my intention, in the following pages, to conduct my reader, town by town, kingdom by kingdom, through every part of Andalusia; giving him a detailed account of its statistics, productions, resources, &c. ; in fact, spreading before him a regular three course banquet of travels; but rather to present him with a light and simple dish of the country, seasoning it with such tales and anecdotes as were picked up in the course of many excursions, made during a period of many years; a *Gazpacho*, as it may be called, whereof the country furnishes the principal part, or bread and water; and to which the tales—so at least I hope it may be found—give the *gusto*, imparted to this favourite Andalusian dish, by the addition of oil, vinegar, and pepper.

A muleteer.

† *Olla*—an earthenware vessel. The well known cognominal mess is so called from being cooked therein.

I may as well premise, also, that I do not intend to mark with precise date the time at which any of the incidents about to be narrated occurred, excepting when the correctness due to matters of history renders such specification necessary, but to transcribe the notes of my various rambles as they come most conveniently to hand; stating generally, however, that they were written during the period comprised between the years 1822 and 1830, (the greater portion of which I belonged to the Garrison of Gibraltar) and have been "revised and corrected, with additions and improvements" from the journal of an extended tour made several years subsequently.

Considering the small number of my countrymen to whom the Spanish language is familiar, I may possibly be accused of having unnecessarily retained many of the proverbs and idioms of the country in their original garb, referring my readers to an English version of them at the foot of each page. But as the caustic, and, in general, quaintly rhymed sayings for which the *Andaluz* is celebrated cannot but lose much of their *Bætic salt* on being translated, I am led to hope that such of my readers as do *not* understand Spanish will pardon the trouble I have thus imposed on them, for the sake of those who do.

In conclusion, I have but to express a hope that the Spanish dish I now offer to the public may not be displeasing to the English taste, though I can hardly expect it should be *devoured* with the relish of the unsophisticated Sancho; who assigned as one of his principal reasons for resigning his government of *Barateria*, that he preferred to “*hartarse de Gazpachos*”* than be subjected to a regimen more befitting his exalted situation.

* Fill himself with gazpachos.

CHAPTER I.

GIBRALTAR — FORBIDDEN GROUND — DERIVATION OF THE NAME — CURIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY OF UTRECHT — EXTRACTION OF SAINTS WITHOUT A MIRACLE — DEMONIACAL POSSESSIONS — BEAUTY OF THE SCENERY — AGREMENTS OF THE GARRISON — ITS IMPORTANCE TO GREAT BRITAIN, BUT IMPOLICY OF MAKING IT A FREE PORT TO ALL NATIONS — LAMENTABLE CHANGES — SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER OF THE MOUNTAINEERS OF RONDA — ENGLISH QUIXOTISM — POLITICAL OPINIONS OF THE DIFFERENT CLASSES IN SPAIN.

BEFORE mounting my impatient steed — not Pegasus, but my faithful Barb "*Almanzor*," — the companion of most of my wanderings ; the partaker of many of my fastings and perils ; and whom — such is the mutability of horse dealing affairs — I saw for the last time curveting under a monstrous weight of whisker and mustaches in Hyde Park ; — I will detain my readers a brief space, to cast a glance at the celebrated place on which we are about to turn our backs.

Let him not take fright, however, at this announcement. It is not my purpose to lead him the round of all the *sights* contained within the walls of this remarkable fortress ; albeit they

are well worthy of his notice. Nor shall I, with professional prolixity, point out to his wondering eyes its crested batteries where 700 cannon bid defiance to the enemies of Great Britain ; still less expose the *arcana* of its famed excavated citadel, its interminable galleries, spacious chambers, &c. which must be as cautiously approached by the pen and ink of the discreet traveller, as by the pickaxe and shovel of the wary sapper : a mysterious veil being drawn over them, which it would ill become any of her Majesty's loyal subjects to remove.

The attempt at concealment is, to be sure, rather absurd ; and, as the late Earl of Chatham drily observed, (on being informed that the plans of the Fortress could only be sent to him from the Engineer's Office, under an escort,) reminded him of the delusion of the ostrich, which, concealing his head in a bush, fancies his whole body is hid from the sight of his pursuers—since, though we carefully lock up *our* plans of the works in a strong box, others, equally good, may be procured for a shilling any where.

To return to my premised glance at the famed rock, I will say a few words of the *unde derivatur* of the name it now bears—Gibraltar—which is generally supposed to be a compound of the Arabic words Gibel (Mountain) and

Tarik, the name of the Moslem general, who first landed in Spain, and with whom originated the idea of making it a place of arms. For though the mount, under the name of Calpe, held a distinguished place in ancient history, as one of the pillars of Hercules, yet it is difficult to imagine that it was ever thought of as a site for a *town*; otherwise, the city of Carteia would hardly have been built in its immediate vicinity.

With respect, however, to the origin of its Moorish name, it is but natural to suppose that this remarkable promontory had some distinguishing appellation in the Arabic dialect, *before* it was seized upon and fortified by *Tarik ben Zaide*; and if therefore it was called after him, it could only have been as indicative of the spot he had fixed upon for effecting his descent upon the Spanish shore. But this can hardly be the case, since he did *not* land there, but near where the town of Tarifa now stands (which place he founded and gave his name to); and the rocky peninsula of Gibraltar was only seized upon by *Tarik* on his subsequently becoming aware of its great natural strength, and the advantages its possession consequently held out, for keeping up the communication with Barbary, and furthering his ulterior projects against Spain.

It seems, on the other hand, much more probable, that the victorious Saracens, arriving at the northern extremity of Africa, and finding how small a space there separated them from Europe, would, whilst eagerly examining the whole line of coast presented to their longing eyes, have naturally given names of their own to the most prominent landmarks observable along it. Now the remarkable head-land that stretched into the sea towards them, its bold outline rendering, to all appearance, the limited space that divided them from their prey yet narrower than it really is,—could not fail to attract their attention ; and it may reasonably enough be supposed that its singular form and apparent isolation led to its being designated Gibel-thar—(Gibel—mountain, and thar, or tar — Sp. tajar — Eng. to cut or sever *)—the severed mountain,—in allusion to its actual separation from the mountainous country behind.

The Spanish historian, Lopez de Ayala, notices this derivation of the name Gibraltar, but prefers the more improbable one of *Gibel Tarik* —or even *Gibel Phatah*—*Phatah* signifying both key and victory ; whereas, the key by which

* The word tar signifies also a ridge either of a house or mountain, and might with great propriety have been applied to the strongly-marked outline of the rock of Gibraltar as compared with the mountains in the neighbourhood.

Spain was laid open to the Moors was Tarifa ; the victory that made them masters of the country was gained at *Xeres de la Frontera*.

The castle of Gibraltar (or *Calahorra*) was not built until thirty years (A. D. 742) after the mountain had been occupied by Tarik ; and the fortress remained in the undisturbed possession of the Moors for upwards of five centuries and a half, when it was captured by Don Alonzo Perez de Guzman ; though it was afterwards recovered by the Moslems, and again remained in their possession upwards of a century.*

By the treaty of Utrecht, which confirmed this valuable possession to Great Britain, it was particularly stipulated that no Turkish vessels should be allowed to anchor under the protection of the fortress ;—so great even at that late period was the dread the Spaniards entertained of Mohammedan invasion. It was also stipulated that no *Jews* should be permitted to domiciliate themselves within the garrison ;—an article of the treaty which has been most glaringly infringed upon.

The archives, &c. were transported to San Roque, whither also most of the Spanish inhabitants removed with their goods and chattels. The church property does not, however, appear to have been suffered to be carried off ; and an

* See Note A in the Appendix.

old Spanish historian gives with pious exultation a very amusing account of the contraband extraction of the saints from the different churches, after the fortress had been finally ceded to heretical England.

The passage cannot but lose in the translation; as indeed every thing in the Spanish language must. But, even in an English garb, its ludicrous seriousness may excite a smile.

“A statue of St. Joseph, which, from its extreme corpulence, could not be secretly transported, was carried away by a good Catholic—by name Joseph Martin of Medina—placed on the back of a horse as if *he* were a person riding. The Saint having been well balanced, enveloped in a cloak, and his head covered with a *montera*,* a person mounted *en croupe* to aid in supporting him, and accompanied by some friends to create confusion and distract attention, they issued forth by the main street without being discovered.”†

The fat Saint was lodged with other valuables at San Roque, where he may be seen to this day. A thinner Saint Joseph supplies his place in the “Spanish Church” at Gibraltar, and I dare say Joseph Martin has been canonized, and may be heard further of at Medina Sidonia.

* Peculiar Spanish cap.

† The original Spanish is given in the Appendix B.

I entirely forget what Saint in particular—or if any—is now charged with the protection of the “town and territory” of Gibraltar; but the intervention of one seems highly necessary, for the devil has obtained a great footing in the place, claiming as his own a Tower—a Bowling-green—a Bellows—a Gap, and—last, not least—a tremendous tongue of fire. Perhaps these offerings have been made to the black gentleman by some good Catholics,—like Joseph Martin,—on the same principle that the old Italian lady presented him with a costly pair of horns,—observing—“*Sta bene far’ amicizia, anche col’ Signor Santo Diavolo.*”

Most persons who have not visited Gibraltar entertain very curious notions respecting it; picturing to themselves a mere rock, bristling with cannon, and crowded with Barracks, Furnaces for Red-hot shot, and Powder-magazines. But, in reality, there are far more places of the same limited extent that can lay claim to greater and more varied natural beauties.

The Road which leads from the picturesque old Moorish castle to the southern extremity of the rocky peninsula (a distance of upwards of two miles) presents a complete change of objects at every turn,—of hanging gardens, impending rocks, and distant vistas of the Spanish and African coasts. On gaining the flats at Europa

Point, few views, finer than that which opens upon you, are any where to be met with ; none more grand than, as inclining to the eastward, the back of the singular mountain bursts upon your sight, its peaked summits rising precipitously near 1400 feet above the Mediterranean, which, lashing in impotent rage its rocky base, ofttimes dashes a shower of spray over the cottage of the Governor, situated under the lofty cliff, but at least 200 feet above the angry ocean.

Again, ascending to the northernmost peak of the rocky ridge, what can exceed the beauty of the panoramic view ?—a wide expanse of sea, studded with countless vessels of all kinds and nations, but so penned in by distant mountains as to assume the appearance of a vast lake, is spread out beneath you :— its glassy surface reflecting the richly wooded or vine-clad hills of Spain, on one side, the savage and sterile mountains of Barbary on the other. Casting the eye beyond the sandy isthmus which to the north separates the isolated rock from the mountains of Spain, it rests upon successive ranges of sierras, (marked by a most pleasing variety of tints,) that seem to convey you into the very heart of the country ; and indeed the view is closed only by the Alpujarra range, which is upwards of a hundred miles distant from the point of view.

Within the Fortress, the hand of man has not neglected to deck out nature, where art could effect improvement. The Red Sands, formerly an unsightly burying ground, have been converted — without disturbing the dust of the tenants of the soil — into public walks and gardens. The rugged tracks, which not long since were dangerous for a horse to travel, have been rendered practicable for carriages, and sheltered from the sun by avenues of trees. The western side of the Rock, which formerly presented a bare and rugged limestone surface, is now clothed with a variety of trees and shrubs, that afford cover to numerous partridges and rabbits, as well as to the aboriginal apes, which have obtained, and not undeservedly, no small share of celebrity ; and this belt of verdure, besides being refreshing to the sight, tends probably to lessen the heat of the place and increase its salubrity.

As a place of residence, I know of no town — being a garrison — that possesses so many agréments. The society is composed of persons of all nations and pursuits, and is varied by the passing visits of numerous strangers, who willingly devote a few days to the examination of the wonders of the celebrated “rock,” and of the beauties of the neighbourhood. The resident English merchants were, in my day, a

most hospitable body, whose society afforded a grateful variation to the but too prevalent “our’s” and “your’s” conversation of a mess table. The *table*, by the way, possesses great attractions to the *Bon vivant*; offering him the enjoyment of most of the gastronomic luxuries of the world at a very cheap rate, and champagne and claret well iced and free of duty. Finally, to the Sportsman, the neighbourhood affords the pleasures of hunting, fishing, shooting, and horse-racing; and to the studious is presented the resource of an excellent library.

I regret to say, however, that I remained at Gibraltar long enough to witness lamentable changes in many things;—to see the commerce of the place gradually decline, first from the jealousy of the Spanish government at its being made a rendezvous for a worthless and ungrateful gang of refugees; secondly, from various impolitic acts emanating from the Colonial office; and lastly, from an awful visitation of the yellow fever, which swept off a third of its dense population, and, for a time, (Cadiz having about this epoch been also declared a Free port) directed the smuggling trade into another channel.

The value of Gibraltar to Great Britain has been questioned by a recent writer on Spain,* who doubts whether it be worth preserving at

* A Year in Spain, by a young American.

the cost of a garrison of 4,000 (3,000 at most) troops, and the stones and mortar required for keeping its defences in repair.

“The command of the Mediterranean,” he observes, “belongs to the strongest fleet.” This—albeit a debateable proposition—I will not stop to dispute; since what Gibraltar claims is simply the command of the *entrance* to the Mediterranean; and that clearly belongs to the power which can most readily keep a force near at hand to prevent all ingress and egress. Now, Gibraltar is so situated as to enable Great Britain to do this, with very small naval means; whereas it would require a fleet of any other nation to watch the Straits, because that power would have also to blockade the port of Gibraltar. This any one at all acquainted with the localities,—the prevailing winds, &c.—will readily admit to be at times an impossibility; and on every occasion that the blockading squadron might be driven from its cruising ground, the command of the Straits would again be possessed by Gibraltar, should its batteries shelter but a few gunboats.

The importance of Gibraltar will increase ten-fold in the event of a *steam war*, as every thing will then depend upon the vicinity of the contending parties to their *coal dépôts*.

But, besides the advantage Gibraltar gives

Great Britain, by the command of the entrance of the Mediterranean, it affords a secure port at which her ships can refit, reprovision, &c. without incurring the expense and loss of time attendant on a long voyage to England. And, with respect to the expense of its maintenance, the benefit accruing to the nation at large by the disposal of her manufactured and other produce to an immense amount, far more than counterbalances the cost of the few thousand troops required for its defence, and which troops may also be looked upon as a kind of support to our advanced posts, Malta, Corfu, &c.

To furnish a proof of the value of Gibraltar to Great Britain, as a market, it will be only necessary to state, that of British manufactured *cotton* goods alone the “barren little rock” takes annually to the value of nearly half a million sterling ;—an amount very nearly equal to that which is exported from the mother country to *all* her North American colonies—whilst the kingdom of Portugal (*favouring* us in return for benefits conferred) takes of the same articles to the amount only of £800,000 ; and all the other ports of Spain together, but to the value of £13,000.

Now though the government gains but a trifling increase of revenue by the vast amount of goods exported to Gibraltar, yet the *good*

that is effected by thus keeping our manufacturers at work may certainly be put down as benefiting the country at a cheap rate, when the cost is but of a few thousand troops ;— the civil servants, &c., being paid out of the crown revenues of the place itself.

On one point, I admit our government appears to be in error ; namely, in making Gibraltar “a free port to *every* flag ;” by which “other nations enjoy the benefit of the establishment, without paying any portion of the expense :”* and it is more particularly to be blamed, for opening it to the produce of the *United States of America*, which, unlike France, Tuscany, Sardinia, and Austria, give our commerce no reciprocating advantage, and whose *tobacco*, imported in immense quantities, pays as aforesaid no portion of the expense of the establishment, but is the article of all others that occasions Spain to watch the transit trade of Gibraltar with such excessive jealousy.

The Spanish government knows full well, that salt fish, manufactured goods of all sorts, and indeed most of the productions of Great Britain, *must* be introduced into the country, and would take but little trouble to check the contraband trade of Gibraltar, if it were confined to such articles ; but the introduction of

* *Young American.*

Tobacco, Cocoa, Sugar, Spices, and other productions of Spain's own colonies, which the British Free port affords other nations the means of pouring into the country, to the detriment of her transatlantic possessions, naturally occasions a greater degree of watchfulness to be adopted, and excites much jealousy and ill will.

At one time, indeed, the combination of untoward circumstances before alluded to, added to the loss of our extensive trade with Oran and Algiers—(occasioned by the imposition of prohibitory duties since the North of Africa became a French Colony)—and the vigilance of the *farmer* who *rented* the preventive cordon—himself an old smuggler—threatened annihilation to the trade of Gibraltar. But, at the present day, it once more “looks up:” smuggling, thanks to the lawless state of Spain, having again furnished occupation to the hardy mountaineers of Ronda and Granada, who, careless what may be the *form* of Government at Madrid provided its authority does not extend to Andalusia, so as to prevent their having free access to the Calicoes and Tobacco of “*La Plaza*,”*—have been alternately crying *Viva la Constitucion* and *Viva el Rey absoluto*, for the last eighteen years.

Having now, for the present, concluded my

* *The Place*—the name, par excellence, by which the Spaniards distinguish Gibraltar.

remarks upon Gibraltar, I will embrace the opportunity,—though “Almanzor” has already been kept an unconscionable time ready saddled —of saying a few words of these rude *Serranos*,* ere I take my reader amongst them.

Smugglers by birth, education, and inclination, it could hardly be expected that they should be distinguished by the possession of any very resplendent virtues. Nevertheless, they are characterized by temperance, honesty, (apart their profession) hospitality, and noble-mindedness. Hardy and enduring, though generally averse to the occupation of husbandry, they can scarcely be termed indolent, since their favourite pursuit is one which exposes them to great fatigue. Proverbially vain, and supremely ignorant, they look upon their country as the first in the world, themselves as its bravest inhabitants: in the latter supposition, being perhaps nearly as far from the truth as in the former; their courage, such as it is, being rather of the tiger kind. Superstitious beyond all belief, and priest-ridden to the last degree, still their naturally caustic and witty temperament cannot be so bridled as to deter them from indulging in jokes and pleasantries, even at the expense of the ceremonies of their church, or the peccadilloes of their ghostly fathers.

* Mountaineers.

As I have stated before, they concern themselves but little with politics ; but, having a most radical distaste for every species of taxation, the government that troubles them least in this particular—that is, which has the *least power* of levying its dues—is naturally the most popular.

In the eventful period in Spanish History, during which I mixed constantly with the natives of all classes, I found the *Serranos* by turns *Realistas*,—*Constitucionalistas*,—*Serviles*,—*Liberales*,—*Moderados*,— and *Exaltados* : their opinions invariably changing for or against the existing [dis]order of things, according to the strength of the preventive cordon drawn round Gibraltar, and the support given to the local authorities in exacting the payment of taxes.

The only change that I ever perceived Liberalism to work in their habits was, that it induced a freer circulation of the pig-skin ; thus leading to inebriety and its concomitants, brawling, insubordination, and depravity ; and though this departure from the sober dignity that characterizes the Spaniard was most observable in the troops, yet the pernicious example set by these lawless bands could not but be of bad omen.

Of the *Serranos* I may in conclusion say, that, considering their ignorance and superstition,

and above all the demoralizing nature of their occupation ; considering also the wild impracticable country they inhabit ; the distracted state of the kingdom ; the lamentably ill-enforced condition of the laws, and the sad venality of all Spanish Authorities ; they are a wonderfully moral and well-behaved race. Assassinations, — when the country is not, as at present, disturbed by political dissensions — are of very rare occurrence ; and the same unhappy state of things has naturally led to the perpetration of numerous personal outrages and increased the number of highway robberies : but larceny and housebreaking are even now rarely heard of ; and Incendiarism, Infanticide, and some other heinous crimes that disgrace more civilized communities, are unknown.

The condition of this singular race presents, therefore, the anomalous spectacle of the co-existence of rare moral qualities with ignorance, lawlessness, and superstition ; and, by instituting a comparison between the condition of the inhabitants of Spain and those of better governed and more enlightened nations, the Philanthropist cannot but entertain a doubt whether a very high degree of education is, in all cases, conducive to the happiness of Mankind.

The experiment now in progress of sending Liberty, armed Cap-a-pee, to take Spain by

storm, ere Truth and Wisdom have battered Bigotry and Ignorance in breach, is one that cannot fail to entail the utmost misery upon that unhappy country for a long space of years.

No *class* of Spaniards is, at the present moment, prepared for the great organic changes in the government and institutions of their country that *we* are pressing upon them. There are doubtless some enlightened men in the upper ranks, who, with the welfare of their country at heart, wish for a change; but their previous life has unfitted them from taking the lead in effecting it. There are also many learned men with heads full of metaphysics and moral and political theories, who fancy they have but to lecture on forms of government to have their views adopted; and in the mass of the people there is a great deal of intelligence sparkling through a dense cloud of ignorance and bigotry; but vanity is the besetting sin of all Spaniards; they cannot bring themselves to think they are behind the rest of Europe; and consequently they do not see that the more liberal institutions of other countries have followed, and not preceded, the "*march of intellect.*"

The various Constitution builders, who, set after set, have succeeded to the direction of affairs, in this luckless country, have invariably found themselves in the situation of a man who,

having pulled down his old house to erect another on the spot, after the model of one he had *read* of, discovered, that though slate, bricks, and mortar, were all at hand, he could not meet with workmen who understood his plan, so as to put his projected structure together; and thus he was driven to seek shelter in an out-house.

But, besides the absolute want of knowledge of the world that all the ministers of Spain have evinced, from Manuel Godoy to the present day, there is yet another want that has been almost equally conspicuous during the same period—namely, the want of *honesty*. One of the best patriots that the country has produced, since the light of liberalism first broke upon it, declared that this want was the source of all Spain's misfortunes.—“*Somos todos corrompidos*”* was his painful confession; and without going to the *full* extent of that assertion, it seems more than probable this rottenness at the core will not be cured, until Spain produces some great tyrant like Napoleon.

A Despot, though not over-scrupulous himself, generally makes his subordinates honest; †

* “We are all corrupt.” Such were the words of Merino Guerra, at his parting interview with the late Sir George Don at Gibraltar, on proceeding—an exile—to South America.

† Napoleon certainly succeeded in making his Satraps honest. In his latter days, Massena would not have dared to repeat the witty reply

but I doubt the possibility of any *set* of men, who have been brought up on plunder, divesting themselves of the habit of *self-appropriation* when possessed of the distribution of the loaves and fishes.

I must no longer, however, delay taking my departure from Gibraltar, or the gates of the fortress will be closed upon me for the night, and frustrate my intention of sleeping at San Roque.

made to the *First Consul* before all the Republican Generals, on his accusing him of being “*un voleur.*” “*Oui, mon General, je suis un voleur, tu es un voleur, il est un voleur — nous sommes des voleurs, vous etes des voleurs, ils sont tous des voleurs.*”

CHAPTER II.

SAN ROQUE—SINGULAR TITLE OF “THE CITY AUTHORITIES”—SITUATION—CLIMATE—THE LATE SIR GEORGE DON, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF GIBRALTAR—ANECDOTE ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CHARACTER OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT—SOCIETY OF SPAIN—THE TERTULIA—THE VARIOUS CIRCLES OF SPANISH SOCIETY TESTED BY SMOKING—ERRONEOUS NOTIONS OF ENGLISH LIBERTY AND RELIGION—STARTLING LENTAL CEREMONIES.

SAN ROQUE is the nearest town to the British fortress, and distant from it about six English miles. A mere village at the period of the last siege of Gibraltar, it has gradually increased, so as at the present day to cover a considerable extent of ground, and to contain a population of upwards of six thousand souls. The title of *City* has even been vicariously bestowed upon it; all public acts, &c., emanating from its different authorities, being headed in the following singular manner,—“The President and Individuals of the Board of health of the *City of Gibraltar*, which, from the material loss of that

place, is established in *this of San Roque* within its territory, &c.”*

The Corregidor, Alcalde, and other authorities, are also designated as of Gibraltar, and not of San Roque.

The town is pleasantly situated on an isolated knoll, the houses entirely covering its summit, and extending some way down its Northern and Western slopes ; but towards Gibraltar and to the East, the ground falls very abruptly, so as to form a natural boundary to the town.

Though quite unsheltered by trees, and consequently exposed to the full power of the sun, San Roque possesses great advantages over Gibraltar in point of climate ; for, whilst its elevation above all the ground in the immediate vicinity secures to it a freer circulation of air than is enjoyed by the pent-up fortress, it is sheltered from the damp and blighting levant wind that blows down the Mediterranean, by a low mountain range, known as the Sierra Carbonera, or Queen of Spain’s Chair, which is distant about a mile from the town, and stretches in a North and South direction, between it and the sea.

* “ *El Presidente e Individuos de la Junta de Sanidad de la Ciudad de Gibraltar, que por la material pérdida de su plaza reside en esta de San Roque de su Campo, &c.* ”—Such was the heading of the Bill of health, with which I travelled when last in Spain.

The baneful *Khamseen* of the desert is not more dreaded by the nomad Arab, than is this pestiferous wind by the desk-bound inhabitant of the Fortress. No sooner does it set in, than a dense cloud gathers round the isolated mountain, and, clinging with mischievous pertinacity to its rugged peaks, involves the Town in a damp, unwholesome atmosphere during the whole period of its continuance. At the same time, the breeze, repelled by the precipitous cliff that bounds the rock to the Eastward, sweeps in furious blasts round both its flanks, driving clouds of sand, flies, and blue devils into every dwelling, and Rheumatism, Asthma, and Lumbago, into the bones, chests, and backs, of their inmates.

San Roque, being free from this intolerable nuisance, is looked upon as a sort of Montpelier by the Gibraltarians, and, at the period of which I write, was very much resorted to by the mercantile classes, who fitted up comfortable "boxes" there, that afforded them an agreeable retreat after their daily labours at the desk were concluded.

The late Sir George Don, whilst Lieut. Governor of the Fortress, invariably passed several months of the year at San Roque; and his noble hospitality, his ever open purse, and constant employment of the poor in works of utility,

secured to him the love and respect of all classes of its inhabitants. Indeed, such was the gallant Veteran's influence in the place, that I may literally say, not a stone could be turned nor a tree planted without "His Excellency's" being first consulted as to the propriety of the measure.

My duty requiring me to be in frequent attendance upon the Lieut. Governor, I generally made one of Sir George's party, whenever he fixed his Head-quarters at San Roque; and on one of these occasions a circumstance occurred that throws such a light upon the extraordinary character of the Spanish Government, that I am tempted to relate it before proceeding further.

I was seated one morning tête-à-tête with the General, waiting the arrival of the Messenger with letters, &c. from the Fortress, when we observed a guard of Spanish soldiers pass by the window, headed by an officer on horseback, and having a prisoner in charge; and to our astonishment they stopped at the General's door. We were waiting with some little curiosity to learn the cause of this extraordinary visit, and were lost in conjectures as to whom the delinquent could be, when the door of the apartment was thrown open, and in rushed the prisoner himself, exclaiming with great excitement

and the volubility of his nation—"General, you doubtless know me—I am Prince Napoleon Lucien Murat—I throw myself upon and claim your protection—I have been entrapped by the vile Spanish government" (this was soon after the restoration of the "*inclito*" Ferdinand). "Invited by the Commandant of San Roque to pay him a visit, I was seduced to leave Gibraltar, and on arriving at the Spanish lines was seized upon and hurried off under an escort, to be imprisoned at Algeciras, where I should have been murdered, but that fortunately I succeeded in persuading the officer charged with my safeguard to pass through San Roque on his way and allow me to speak to you. He unwittingly acceded to my request, and I now place myself under the protection of the British flag."

"Monsieur," replied the General, with no slight astonishment, "this is indeed a very extraordinary, and apparently most unjustifiable proceeding; but I am sorry to inform you that I can afford you no *protection*. The British flag does not fly at San Roque; and I myself reside here only by permission of the Spanish government. My good offices,—as far as they can be of service in liberating you,—shall not be wanting; but, in the mean time, pray let me hear further particulars of this plot against your liberty; and Scott,"—turning to me—"have

the goodness to go to the Spanish Commandant, and request he will favour me with a few minutes' conversation."

I proceeded as directed to the quarters of the Colonel of the Regiment of Granada, which at that time formed the garrison of San Roque, and was ushered in to the Commandant, whom I found at his toilet, and not a little surprised at my early visit.

Now *Don Alonso del Pulgar Apugal*—for such were the Colonel's patronymics—was the least likely man in the world to be employed in a case of abduction. He was a soft, open-hearted, honeycomb-headed, fat, good-natured man, of about five and forty, without two military ideas, and not half a dozen on any other subject. What little knowledge he did possess, was of dogs, guns, charges, and wadding. But, at the same time, I knew the Don to be a gentleman, and incapable of acting the part with which he was charged. When, therefore, I explained the circumstances that had led to my waiting upon him, ere his unnameables were yet finally braced round his portly person, he was most excessively astonished, and repelled with indignant warmth the vile accusation of being the abettor—indeed, the principal mover—in the infamous plot that had placed Prince Lucien's body at the tender mercies of six Spanish bayonets,

and his neck in jeopardy of the *garrote**—“*Valgame Dios!*” he at length exclaimed, “surely the poor young man cannot have deceived himself by taking *al pie de la letra*, our usual Spanish compliment;—for now I recollect, when he was introduced to me at the *dog-meeting*” (he meant at the fox-hunt) “some time back, we had some conversation about shooting, and I said my dogs and guns were at his disposition † whenever he wished for a day’s sport.—*Pobre-cito!*—it is possible I may thus unconsciously have been the cause of this unfortunate affair.”

Such, however, did not turn out to be the case, for the Prince had presented himself at the Spanish lines, provided with both dogs and gun, and accompanied by a sportsman to show him the country.

The kind-hearted Colonel hurried down to Sir George, buckling his sword on as he went, and was immediately on his arrival taken into a private room to consult as to what could be done in the business, as well as to hear the officer of the escort’s edition of the story. Mons. Murat meanwhile remained in the study with

* The punishment of death by strangulation is so called, from the *short stick*, by turning which an iron collar, that goes round the criminal’s neck, is brought so tight as to cause instant death.

† The usual complimentary mode of expression amongst Spaniards, which has no more meaning than the “Obedient humble Servant” at the bottom of an English letter.

one of the general's Aides de Camp (my friend Budgen of the Royal Engineers) and myself, and to us, who were yet unacquainted with the heinous nature of the crime of which he was accused by the Spanish government, appeared to be most unnecessarily alarmed, and to rely but little on the friendly interference of Sir George ; on which indeed he had as little claim as upon the protection of the British flag, beyond the jurisdiction of which he had voluntarily placed himself :—for, considering perhaps that such a step would have been beneath his dignity as an ex-prince of the Two Sicilies, he had neglected to pay the customary compliment of calling upon the Governor on arriving at the Fortress, and was consequently unknown.

After sundry exclamations of regret at having suffered himself to be made a prisoner without a struggle, he asked if there was a door of communication with the street running at the back of the house ; and, on my replying in the affirmative, he proposed that I should lend him my military frock coat, and ask an English officer who had accompanied him and remained outside to meet him there with his horse—“*alors*”—said he—the reckless valour of the father showing itself—“*avec le sabre de Tupper** je

* He had fallen in with Capt. Tupper of the 23d Fuzileers (with whom he was well acquainted) on his way to Algeciras, who had

m'en—de ces laches d'Espagnols." This of course was out of the question ; as however unfairly he might have been kidnapped — and of which we had yet to be convinced—it was clear that Sir George's honour, on the faith of which he had been permitted to enter and remain in the house, would have been compromised by our connivance at his escape from it.

We did all we could to quiet his apprehensions until the return of Sir George, who informed him that it appeared from the statement of the officer of the escort, that orders had been received from the general officer commanding at Algeciras to arrest him, should he, on any pretence, again pass the limits of the British garrison.

The kind-hearted old General expressed the utmost regret at his having been so imprudent as to trust himself a second time in Spain (for only a month before he had been conducted to Gibraltar under an escort from Malaga) — and hoping that his own consciousness of innocence would relieve him from any fear as to the result of the affair, gave him a letter to General José

accompanied him to San Roque. Poor Tupper ! led away by a somewhat quixotic love of strife, he was persuaded in an unlucky moment to throw up his company in one of the first regiments in the British service, to become the *Colonel* of a regiment of adventurers, and was killed whilst gallantly leading on his men at the first attack on *Hernani* of fatal memory.

O'Donnell, who commanded in the *Campo de Gibraltar*; in which letter he requested, as a favour to himself, that every respect and attention might be paid to the young Frenchman:—a favour he had every right to ask, from one who had received so many more important ones at his hands.—

General O'Donnell, in his reply, stated that he had but acted in conformity with instructions received from Madrid—that Monsieur Murat had some months previously landed at Malaga from a vessel which, when on its passage with him to America, had been obliged to put into that port to repair some slight damage experienced in a gale of wind—that, during his stay there, he had publicly expressed his hostility to the king's government, and, instead of proceeding to his destination when the vessel again put to sea, he had appeared rather disposed to establish himself in that (not over-loyal) city.—The Spanish government viewed these circumstances with a very suspicious eye; particularly as his elder brother had, but a few years before, been one of the *aspirans* to the constitutional crown of Spain;—and he had consequently been sent with a *guard of honour* to Gibraltar, from whence opportunities for America are more frequent than from Malaga.

In compliance with Sir George Don's request, General O'Donnell promised that every attention should be paid to the youth's comfort, consistent with his safe custody, until instructions as to his disposal should be received from the capital.

The cause of the violent proceedings adopted by the Spanish government turned out eventually to be, that this scion of Despotism had sung *Riego's hymn* all the way from Malaga to Gibraltar; some of his *guard of honour* even joining in chorus! and that at Estepona he had, through the influence of a *colonato*,* persuaded an old barber who had shaved him — he being the ex-trumpeter of the *Nacionales*—to play the forbidden tune to the astonished fishermen of the place!

The sequel of this state affair was, that Monsieur Murat remained in durance at Algeciras, until a vessel bound to the United States offered him the means of crossing the Atlantic.

I used to find that an occasional visit to San Roque made a very agreeable break in the monotony of a garrison life; for what place, let its attractions be ever so great, does not become dull when one is *per forza* obliged to make it a residence? Even London, Paris, or Vienna, would not stand the test.

* A Spanish *pillared* dollar.

The society of San Roque was not of a very *exclusive* kind ; for but little of the *sangre azul** of Spain flowed in the veins of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, there, as elsewhere, some families were to be met with who looked upon themselves as of a superior order to the rest of the community ; condescending, however, to mix with them on the most friendly footing at their nightly *Tertulia*. This is a kind of “at home,” announced to be held sometimes once or twice a week, sometimes nightly, at the houses of the leading families of a town ; the *reunion* taking place after the theatre—should there be one.†

In large towns it frequently happens that several houses are open to receive company on the same night. But, although it is considered rather a slight to neglect showing yourself at those to which you have the entrée, it is by no

* Blue blood.

† The term *Tertulia* was originally applied to an assembly of *Literati*, which met to discuss the opinions held by *Tertulian*, and even to this day those who attend these, now festive, meetings, are called *Tertulianos*.

The following lines contain a biting satire on the *Tertulians* of the olden time, (for they can hardly be applied to those of the present) and might perhaps not inaptly be addressed to other self-appointed literary judges in various parts of the world.

*Y entraron los Tertulianos—rigidíssimos jueces,
que sedientes de Aganipe, se enjuagan ; pero no
bebén.*

which may be thus freely translated.—Thirsting, the *Tertulians* arrive at Aganippe’s fountain ; infallible judges!—They rinse their mouths, but drink not.

means necessary to do more than that; it being optional with you to pass the evening at whichever house you find most attractive, after going the round of all. Even the ladies who open their houses for *Tertulias* consider it necessary to send some of the members of their family to the rival assemblies; always with a message of regret at not being able to go themselves, their own party being *so very crowded* that they could not possibly absent themselves from it, without giving offence to their numerous guests.

It must be confessed that the *Tertulia* is a very agreeable mode of associating; that it offers great variety, without being attended with the least formality, and entails but slight expense on the entertainers; iced water and *sospiros** being, excepting on gala nights, the only refreshment offered to the company.

There is very little difference observable in the various grades of Spanish society. The same incessant loud talking amongst the females distinguishes the whole; dancing, singing, cards, and games of forfeits, are the amusements of all. Even dress, until of late years, did not furnish a distinction, excepting, in a slight degree, by the costliness of the materials.

But French taste, with its monstrous and

* Lit:—*a sigh*—a kind of puff made principally of sugar, which dissolves immediately on being dipped in water.

ever-varying eccentricities, has corrupted that of the upper ranks of Spain, and occasioned the graceful and becoming national costume to be in a great measure laid aside.

The great distinction that marks the various grades of Spanish society, is the latitude given to *smoking*. In the first circles, it is altogether prohibited. In the second, it is confined to a back room, or suffered in the patio.* In all others it is freely permitted.

It is a positive libel on the ladies of Spain to say that they smoke under any circumstances ; though the disgusting habit prevails amongst the females of Mexico and other transatlantic states that formerly were included in the empire of *both worlds*.

A good letter of introduction insures a foreigner admission into the best Spanish society. He is taken the round of all the tertulias, and, on receiving from the lady of any house the assurance that it is *at his disposition*, may present himself there as often as he pleases. Should this form be withheld, he may take it for granted — despite the whisperings of self-love—that his future attendance is not wished for.

* An open court. Most Spanish houses are built so as to enclose a court or garden — which in summer is much used by the family, being protected from the sun by a canvass awning.

The need of some little acquaintance with the Spanish language caused but few English officers to enter into the society of San Roque ; but living there as much as I did, and being often placed in communication with the authorities, I derived from it a source of great amusement. Indeed, to Lady Viale* and her amiable family I am indebted for many agreeable evenings ; her house uniting the pleasing informality of Spanish with the solid hospitality (I use the term in our eating and drinking sense of it) of English society.

It would be an error to depict the manners and customs of the inhabitants of San Roque, as those of the natives of Andalusia generally ; since, in their various pursuits, the former are so frequently thrown in contact with Englishmen and other foreigners settled at Gibraltar, that they cannot but have acquired some of their habits, and imbibed some of their ideas. Nevertheless, there is a self-conceit about all Spaniards, that makes them particularly slow in throwing off their nationality ; and the difference is consequently not so great as might naturally be expected. A proof of this is afforded by the circumstance of the English language not being spoken, nor even understood, by fifty of the inhabitants of San Roque ;

* Widow of Sir Emanuel Viale—Roman Consul in Gibraltar.

although it is evidently so much their interest to acquire it.

Their intercourse, on the other hand, (and this is observable in all the sea-port towns of Spain) has given them strangely ill defined notions of *English liberty*, and equally extraordinary opinions of our religious tenets; and has filled their minds with highly constitutional ideas of the iniquity of taxation, and most conscientious scruples as to the propriety of supporting a national church. I fear, indeed, that deistical, nay I believe I should say Atheistical, opinions prevail to a great extent amongst the upper orders of Spaniards, though they still continue to observe — if not the penances — all the superstitious ceremonies and absurd fooleries of the Romish church.

One of their extraordinary lental ceremonies I became acquainted with under very *alarming* circumstances. I was awaked one fine April morning, during one of my earliest visits to San Roque, by a most furious fusillade, which, considering the unsettled state of Spain at that particular juncture, I naturally enough concluded was occasioned by some popular commotion. The appearance of my servant in answer to a hasty summons of the bell immediately quieted my apprehensions on that score, however; the broad grin that distended his round

Kentish countenance plainly bespeaking the absence of all danger ;—though what occasioned his unwonted merriment puzzled me to divine. In reply to my inquiries touching the firing, the only answer I could obtain was, “They’re a shooting of Hoodah.”—“And who the deuce is Hoodah ?” said I, “and what has he been about ?”—But on these points he was quite as ignorant as myself ; so dressing with all possible despatch—the astounding rolls of musketry, and as it appeared to me of field artillery also, continuing the whole time I was so occupied, seeming indeed to spread to all parts of the town—I issued forth, armed up to the teeth, and on turning the corner of the street saw, to my horror, a human figure suspended in the air, and reduced almost to a bundle of rags by the incessant firing of— as I supposed —a party of soldiers posted in a cross street.

This surely is “making assurance doubly sure,” thought I. Why the poor devil can’t have an inch of sound flesh in his body after all this peppering. The bang, bang continued incessantly, however, accompanied by roars of laughter, until at length the ill-fated Hoodah was in a blaze. A crowd of men and boys, armed with guns, pistols, and blunderbusses, now rushed from the cross street, (where they had been concealed from my view) rending the

air with *vivas*. At this same moment a loud peal of music burst upon me from a neighbouring church, and from its portal issued a long train of priests preceded by the Host. With these came the recollections of its being Easter Sunday, and of the guttural pronunciation of the Spanish *J*; and quite ashamed of my war-like demonstration, I retreated to my house yet quicker than I had issued from it.

The distant firing continued some time longer; and I afterwards learnt that the effigies of no less than seven *Judas*es had that morning been severally hanged, shot, and burnt, to satisfy the holy rage of the devout inhabitants of San Roque.

CHAPTER III.

COUNTRY IN THE VICINITY OF SAN ROQUE — RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF CARTEIA — FIELD OF BATTLE OF ALPHONSO THE ELEVENTH — JOURNEY TO RONDA — FOREST OF ALMORAIMA — MOUTH OF THE LIONS — FINE SCENERY — TOWN OF GAUCIN — A SPANISH INN — OLD CASTLE AT GAUCIN — INTERIOR OF AN ANDALUSIAN POSADA — SPANISH HUMOUR — MOUNTAIN WINE.

THE country in the immediate vicinity of San Roque is tame and uninteresting ; but, within the distance of an hour's ride, in whatever direction you may turn your horse's head, it becomes agreeably varied,—presenting wide, cultivated valleys, shady forests of cork, oak, and pine, and wild and cragged mountains.

In the neighbourhood are many objects well deserving the attention of the antiquary ; amongst others, the ruins of the ancient city of Carteia, situated on the sea-shore, within the bay of Gibraltar, and near the mouth of the River Guadaranque. The walls may be traced very distinctly ; they enclose an amphitheatre,

in a tolerable state of preservation, reliques of baths and other edifices, and the remains of a small temple of Corinthian architecture and most exquisite and elaborate workmanship.

This last has only recently been discovered. It was built of beautiful white marble, and its columns, though lying prostrate, appeared to have suffered little by their fall; but such is the want of antiquarian taste in the Spaniards of the present day, that it is to be feared this fine specimen of the arts has already disappeared, and is now only to be met with in detached blocks, scattered throughout the neighbouring farm-houses and walls.

The learned Mr. Francis Carter, whose interesting "Journey from Gibraltar to Málaga" has, it is much to be regretted, been long out of print, states, that Carteia was built on the ruins of a "most antique" city called Tar-tessus, or Tarsis, from whence, "once in three years," the fleets of King Solomon "brought gold and silver, ivory and *apes* and peacocks."* The Greeks afterwards called this city Heraclea,† and in yet more recent times it received the name of Carteia.

The Carthaginians (on the authority of Justin) made themselves masters of this place,

* 1st Book of Kings, ch. 10. v. 22. See Note C in Appendix.

† According to Strabo, however, the original founder of this city was Hercules, from whom it received the name of Heraclea.

about 280 years B.C., and retained possession of it until they were finally expelled from Spain by Scipio Africanus, B.C. 203. It was one of the cities most devoted to the cause of the Pompeys, and that to which Cneus fled for refuge after his defeat at Munda. On the margin of the River Guadaranque, at a short distance from the walls of the city, may be seen some remnants of its ancient quays, and about a mile higher up the stream, other vestiges of antiquity present themselves, which are supposed to be the remains of a Dock or Arsenal. They consist of several moles constructed of stone and brick intermixed, and held together by a very durable cement.

The Guadaranque (River of Mares) discharges itself into the bay of Gibraltar, three miles N.W. of the fortress; and some distance further to the westward, the Palmones, another mountain stream, also empties itself into the bay. In the bed of this latter river may be seen the piers of a ruined bridge, said to be a work of the Romans. It is evident from these remains, that a great change has taken place in the character of the two rivers: since the first can now be entered only by boats of the very lightest draught, and the other is fordable immediately above the ruins of the Roman bridge.

The plain between the two rivers is not devoid of interest, being celebrated as one of the battle fields of the heroic Alphonso XI. (A D. 1333) whose exploits, independent of his having been the most chivalric monarch of the Castillian race, are particularly interesting to Englishmen, from the circumstance of many of our countrymen having fought under his banner against the Moslems, and particularly at the siege of Algeciras: which place, notwithstanding the destructive weapons* there for the first time employed against the Christian army, was captured after a twenty months' siege, and in spite of the repeated attempts of the allied kings of Granada and Gibraltar to relieve it, A.D. 1344. In these various endeavours to raise the siege, the plain extending between the Guadaranque and Palmones again became the scene of fierce contention; of which a most interesting account will be found in Villasan's *Chronicles of Alphonso XI.*

Numerous other points in the neighbourhood of San Roque are equally worthy of observation; but these I shall not detain my reader longer to particularise, as other opportunities will present themselves for doing so more conveniently, in the course of our travels; it being my purpose to make San Roque a kind of

* Pieces of Artillery.

“ base of operations,” upon which I shall from time to time retire, for a fresh supply of notes and sketches. I shall now therefore direct my steps due north, through the lonely and almost boundless forest of Almorama, towards Ximena.

The forest consists principally of cork, oak, and ilex ; but, in the marshy parts of it, (called *sotos*,) ash, willow, and other trees to which such localities are favourable, grow very luxuriantly.

The owner of this vast domain is the Marquis of Moscoso,—who derives from it a revenue totally disproportioned to its value and extent ; and what little he does get, he squanders nightly at the gaming-table. The principal source of revenue arises from the numerous herds of swine and other cattle, that are driven from all parts of the country to feed upon the acorns, herbage, and underwood, scattered throughout the forest ; the fine, well grown trees with which it abounds being turned to no better account than to furnish bark and charcoal.

This is entirely owing to the want of means of conveying the timber to a market ; for not even to Gibraltar — in which direction the country is level — is there a road capable of bearing the draught of heavy weights. Of

course the ruinous passion that swallows up all the proprietor's resources prevents any attempt at improvement in the management of the estate; and thus, whilst huge trees, stript of their bark, lie rotting in some parts of the forest, in others, the underwood is set on fire by the peasantry — to the great detriment of the larger trees—to improve the pasture for their cattle.

The ride through the forest is delightful, even in the most sultry season, the wide-spreading branches of the gnarled cork-trees screening the narrow paths most effectually from the sun's rays. The gurgle of the tortuous Guadaranque,— which, escaped from the mountain ravines that encircle its sources, here wends its way more leisurely to the sea,— may be heard distinctly on the left, and now and then a glimpse may even be caught of its dark blue stream, winding under a perfect arbour of woodbine, clematis, and other creepers, and spanned here and there by a rustic bridge. The single stem of a tree of which these bridges usually consist is readily enough crossed by the practised feet and heads of the swineherds and foresters; but to strangers unskilled in the art of slack rope dancing, the passage of the stream, like that of the bridge leading to the Mohammedan's paradise, is a feat of no very easy achievement.

Occasionally, wide, open glades, carpeted with a rich greensward, present themselves in the very heart of the forest, to diversify the scenery—giving it quite the character of an English park; and from these breaks in the wood a view may generally be obtained of the far-distant towers of Castellar; the mountain fortress of the master of this princely domain, now inhabited by his *Administrador*, or Agent, his gamekeepers, and other dependents.

The forest abounds in deer, wild boars, and wolves; but, excepting the first named, these animals seldom venture to descend into the level parts of the forest in open day, but confine themselves to the thickly wooded glens, that furrow the mountain range bordering the right bank of the Guadaranque.

Permission to shoot in the forest is never refused to the British officers and inhabitants of Gibraltar. Indeed, excepting for the *caza mayor*,* the ceremony of asking leave is not considered necessary; and in the winter season the *sotos* afford good sport, woodcocks, ducks, and snipes, being very plentiful.

Turning now away from the Guadaranque, and leaving a spacious convent that gives its name to the forest, about half a mile on the left, the road inclines to the eastward, and soon

* Large game.

reaches a large solitary building, the *Venta del Aqua del Quejigo*, but known more commonly amongst the English by the name of the Long Stables, and distinguished as the scene of many a festive meeting, and many a bacchanalian orgie, being a favourite place of rendezvous for a *Batida*.* My head aches at the very recollection of the nights passed within its walls. We will therefore pass on, and again plunge into the forest.

After proceeding about a mile, the road divides into two branches. That on the right hand is the most direct way to Gaucin, whither I am bending my steps; but the other, though little known, is the best, and offers more attractions to the lover of the picturesque. I will therefore take it, in the present instance, and advise all who may follow in my wake to do the like.

Continuing two miles further through the impervious forest, the road at length arrives at the brink of a deep ravine on the right, when a lovely view breaks upon the traveller, looking over a rich valley watered by the river Sogarganta, and towards the mountain fortress of Casares and lofty Sierra Bermeja. The road, hemmed in by steep banks, and still over-

* The Spanish term for a shooting party, where beaters are employed to drive the game.

shadowed by the forest, descends rather rapidly towards the before named river ; and this narrow pass, being the only outlet from the forest in this direction, has, from its celebrity in days past as a place of danger, received the name of the *Boca de Leones*—mouth of the lions.

On emerging from the pass, a wide and carefully cultivated valley presents itself. The river which fertilizes it, here makes a considerable elbow ; the chain of hills clothed by the Almoraima forest checking its southerly course, and directing it nearly due east towards the Mediterranean. To the north, the valley extends nearly ten miles, appearing to be closed by a conical mound that is crowned by the old castle of Ximena ; the town itself being piled up on its eastern side.

The road to that place (eight miles) keeps along the right bank of the Sogarganta, which winds gracefully through the wide, flat-bottomed valley ; but the track to Gaucin crosses by a ford to the opposite side of the stream, and, after advancing about four miles, inclines to the right, traverses a low range of hills, and comes down upon the river Guadiaro. This is crossed by means of a ferryboat, and leaving its bank, and proceeding in a northerly direction, the road passes over a gently undulated country

for several miles, and then begins to ascend a high wooded ridge on the right hand.

The ascent is long and tortuous, but tolerably easy, and the view, looking towards Ximena (distant about five miles) is very grand and imposing. The castellated crag, so proudly conspicuous an hour before, is now, however, shorn of all its importance; the superior elevation of the point from whence it is viewed, as well as the magnificence of the mountains that rise to the westward of Ximena—which now first burst upon the sight—making it appear but a pebble at their feet.

But scenery of a more varied and yet more magnificent kind awaits the traveller, at the pass by which the road traverses the ridge that he has now been nearly an hour ascending.

The lovely valley of the Genal* is there spread out to his enraptured gaze. On the left, embosomed in groves of orange, citron, and pomegranate trees, and shadowed with clustering vines, stands the picturesque town of Gau-cin,—its boldly outlined castle perched on the crest of a rough ledge of rock that rises abruptly behind.

Stretching some way down the eastern side of the cragged mound, the advanced battlements of the Moorish stronghold terminate at the

* This must not be confounded with the more celebrated *Genil*.

brink of a frightful precipice, which not only forbids all approach to the town in that direction, but threatens even some day to close up the narrow valley it overhangs.

Of the little stream that flows in the deep and thickly wooded ravine, an occasional glimpse only can be caught, as it turns coquettishly from side to side; but its general direction is marked by a succession of water-mills, as well as by a belt of orange and lemon groves, whose dark green foliage is easily distinguished from, and offers a pleasing variety to, the more brilliant tints of the surrounding forest. Beyond, however, where the valley becomes wider and more open, the stream may be distinctly traced lingering over its pebbly bed, and finally forming its junction with the Guadiaro.

The steep but graceful slopes of the mountain ridge that bounds the valley to the east are thickly clothed with cork, oak, chesnut, and ilex; whilst the rugged peaks of the Sierra Cristellina, in which it terminates towards Gibraltar, rise so precipitously as seemingly to defy even a goat to find footing. Over this chain may be seen the distant Sierra Bermeja, celebrated in Spanish history as the last refuge of the persecuted Moslems, and the eastern roots of which are washed by the Mediterranean.

Half an hour's ride brings the traveller from the pass to Gaucin, — the descent being but short, and very gradual. Gaucin is a long straggling town, of semi-circular form, and is built partly under the rocky eminence occupied by the castle, partly on the southern slope of a narrow gorge that connects this stronghold with the more elevated *Sierra del Hacho*. The principal street, which traverses the place from west to east, is wider than most one is accustomed to see in old Moorish towns, and cleaner than any I have met with in modern Spanish cities. But nature has all the merit of endowing it with the latter virtue; having supplied it with copious springs, which, in their downward course, carry off all the usual impurities of Andalusian streets. The houses, though not good, are clean, and are decorated with a profusion of flowers of all sorts, that give out a delicious perfume; and in various parts of the town, a vine-clung trelliswork of canes is carried quite across the street, affording at the same time an agreeable shade and a pleasing vista. The first impression made by the town is therefore decidedly favourable.

We—(I ought by the way to have stated before now, that the party with which I travelled on this occasion consisted of *four*)—we therefore, I repeat, had to traverse the town

from one end to the other, to arrive at the *posada*; which was indicated only by the short, inorthographical, but otherwise satisfactory and invigorating announcement, painted in large black letters on the whitewashed wall of the building—“*Aqui se bende vuen bino.*”*

A cockney could not have managed to make more mistakes between his *v*’s and *w*’s, than our *Andaluz Posadero*† had succeeded in compressing into this pithy advertisement;—hoping, however, that he held his plighted word in greater respect than the rules of Castillian grammar;‡ we spurred our horses through the half-opened *porte cochère*, and, à l’*Espagnole*, rode at once into the principal apartment of the hostelry.

The interior was far from giving the same cheering assurance that good entertainment was to be had for money, as was announced externally of the sale of good wine. I was as yet (I speak of my first visit to Gaucin) but a novice in Spanish travelling, and thought I had never seen a more wretched, uncomfortable, and in every way unpromising, place. But the day was already far spent, and the chance of our finding better accommodation by proceeding

* *Aqui se vende buen vino*—Here good wine is sold.

† *Posadero*—keeper of a *Posada*—Innkeeper.

‡ Spaniards never say the Spanish grammar, the Spanish tongue, &c.—but *La Gramatica Castellana*—*La Lingua Castellana*, &c.

further on our journey was against us ;—moreover, we had been assured (which by experience I afterwards learnt to be the case) that this was the only *Parador* fit for *Caballeros* between San Roque and Ronda.

It consisted of one long, windowless apartment, that from the number and variety of its inmates gave no bad idea of Noah's ark. Three fourths of the dark smoky space served as a stable, wherein four rows of quadrupeds were compactly tethered ; and, impatient for their evening meal, were neighing, braying, and bleating, with all the powers of their respective lungs. Amidst the filth and litter that covered the pavement, lay numberless pigs of all sizes, and every condition of life ; some squeaking for mere squeaking's sake, others grunting in all the discomfort of repletion. On the rafters overhead some scores of gallinaceous animals had congregated for the night ; adding, nevertheless, their quota of noise to that of the lower region, whenever one of their number was abducted from the roost, to be hurried out of its peaceful existence, into a greasy olla. The remaining portion of the apartment served both as a refectory and a dormitory for the *arrieros*,—owners of the tethered quadrupeds—and also as a kitchen, where their various odiferous suppers were preparing.

The mistress of the mansion — as wrinkle-visaged an old harridan as ever tossed off a bumper of *aguadiente* — assisted by her two daughters, was busily employed, plucking, drawing, dissecting, and otherwise preparing, divers rabbits, chickens, and other animals, to satisfy the craving appetites of her numerous guests ; and cats innumerable were in close attendance, clawing and squabbling for the offal, which, to save all further trouble, was thrown to them on the floor.

The prospect was any thing but inviting ; but, as I have said before, there was no alternative ; —so, begging the *Posadera* to draw near, we requested she would inform us whether we could be accommodated with a lodging for the night. Having deliberately scanned the party, and ascertained to her satisfaction that it consisted entirely of Englishmen, — whose pockets Spaniards are apt to consider as inexhaustible as the mines of Mexico and Peru,—the old beldame, oiling her iron features into a species of smile, assured us we could be lodged *con toda comodidad* ;* and screeching to her daughter *Mariquita*, she desired her to hand over the rabbit she was skinning to her *hermanita*† *Frasquita*, and show the *Caballeros*‡ to the *Sala*. §

* With every convenience.

† Little sister.

‡ Strictly speaking, *Knights*, but applied to all gentry. § Parlour.

Mariquita led us forthwith up a narrow rickety staircase, which, situated in a dark corner of the room, had escaped our observation ; and into a small room, or rather loft, where she assured us we should be very quiet and comfortable ; adding that it was always reserved for *gente de pelo** like ourselves.

The only comfort apparent was the undisturbed possession of a space twelve feet square, enclosed by four bare walls : for of bedding or furniture of any sort it was quite destitute. We submitted with as good a grace as possible, but, after some persuasion, succeeded in procuring four mattresses to spread on the clay floor ; as many pairs of clean sheets and pillows ; and some pie-dishes to serve as wash-hand basins. We then descended, to have some further conversation with our hostess concerning supper.

The landlady's reply to our first question, "what can we have?" was gratifying in the extreme—viz. "*lo que ustedes gusten*"—"just what you please." But, discovering by our next, more explicit demand, "what can you give us?" that we depended upon the resources of the *posada* for our evening meal, her astonishment knew no bounds, and her doubts of the

* Literally translated — people of *hair*, but here evidently meaning people of *substance*.

Potosi state of our purses became very evident. Leaving, therefore, the delicate affair to be explained and settled by one of our servants, who, being an old traveller, understood how to negotiate these matters, we proceeded to examine the ruined castle, ere the sun had sunk below the horizon.

A rugged zig-zag pathway—along which, at stated intervals, are represented the various sufferings and indignities endured by our Saviour on his way to Mount Calvary—leads to the summit of the rocky ledge. The fortress that crowns it must, in the days of the Moors, have possessed great military importance, as it completely commands the valley, and consequently all the roads leading through it, towards the coast. It is now merely a picturesque ruin ; its Artillery being dismounted, its wells choked up, and its battlements overgrown with ivy. A chapel dedicated to the *Niño Dios** is apparently the only thing within its precincts deemed worthy of preservation.

The view from this spot is very extensive and beautiful, but hardly so fine as one (which will be hereafter noticed) that presents itself some miles higher up the valley, when the castle itself becomes one of the principal features of

* Infant God.

the landscape, whilst the distant scenery remains the same.

Returning to the Posada, we lighted our cigars ; and, feeling sensibly the change in the temperature of this elevated region, we joined the natives assembled round the fireplace, who, with the courtesy natural to all Spaniards, immediately rose and offered us the seats of honour.

The portion of the apartment allotted to the human kind had now become crowded with persons of all sorts and conditions ; for the animals being peacefully engaged at their evening repast, their owners thought it time to be looking after their's. Some, indeed, had already satisfied the cravings of nature from their own wallets and *pig-skins*, and, taking time by the forelock, were stretched full length on the floor ; their *Mantas* and *Capas* serving them for mattresses and coverlets, their saddles and *alforjas* for bolsters and pillows. Others, seated on low stools composed of junks of cork, had resolved themselves into committees, to discuss the merits of a *Gazpacho caliente*,* or direct their inquiries into the hidden treasures of a savoury *olla*. Some were assisting the hostess and her somewhat pretty daughters, in their

* A *hot Gaspacho*, which consists of the same materials as the *Gazpacho fresco*, but, when an evening meal, is usually heated at the fire.

culinary operations ; and many were assembled round the wide chimneypiece, drinking, smoking, manufacturing *papelitos* for the morrow's consumption, and relating their adventures.

Here also were seated several of the village magnates, who repair nightly to this convenient rendezvous, as well to indulge a natural propensity to gossip, as to hear the news from *La Plaza*, and negotiate with the arrieros for their contraband cottons and tobacco.

The whole presented an interior quite suited to the pencil of a Teniers. A bright wood fire sparkled on the wide hearth, shedding a brilliant red light upon the group of animated figures assembled in its immediate vicinity, and here and there also picking out some conspicuous figure from the more distant parties. The back ground was in deep Murillo shade, excepting on one side ; where the flickering flame of a solitary lamp, contrasting its pale light with that of the fire, cast a yellow tinge on the squalid features of the hostess and her help-mates, round whom the eyes of some dozen of cats danced like monster fireflies. A well polished *batterie de cuisine* ; sides of bacon ; ropes of onions ; platters ; goblets and tobacco smoke, were not wanting to fill up the picture. But it was perfect without the aid of such accessories ; the spirit and expression of each actor in

the Spanish scene, and the diversity of costume, giving it a decided superiority over a picture of the “*Flemish School* ;” in which foaming pots of beer, and a melting *frau*, must needs be introduced, to extract animation from the stolid features of the assembled boors.

The lower order of Spaniards have a great deal of racy humour which renders them admirable *raconteurs*. The *arrieros* assembled round the fire on the present occasion were relating some story of the barbarous treatment received by a good Capuchin friar, at the hands of some wicked *ladrones*,* who, finding he possessed nothing worth being plundered of, had bastinadoed his feet until he could not walk, tied his hands together, enveloped him in a goat skin, fastened a pair of ram’s horns on his head, a bell to his rosary, and suspending that from his neck, had left him to crawl as he best could, to the nearest village.

This tale, though not addressed to him, was evidently intended for the ears of a monk of the same mendicant order, who, pale and trembling, sat in one corner of the chimney place, listening, with open-mouthed attention, to every word the *arrieros* said ; at the same time counting his beads without intermission, and crossing himself devoutly at the relation of each fresh act

* Thieves.

of barbarity practised on his unfortunate brother.

From the significant glances that from time to time passed between the narrators,—for several of the assembled group came forward to vouch for the truth of the story,—and latterly between them and ourselves, when they saw we were aware of the drift of their joke; it was evidently all fiction; but the tale was told with such minute details, and its veracity maintained by so many asseverations, that any one, not seeing the by-play, might easily, like the unhappy monk, have been made the victim of the hoax.

Caramba! at length exclaimed the *Alcalde mayor** of Gaucin, who occupied one corner of the fireplace—“*Caramba!* this is a strange story! and it is most extraordinary, that in my official capacity”—this was said with a certain magisterial air—“I should not have been made acquainted with it. Pray tell me; *when* did this happen? and what became of the pious man?”—“With respect to the time,” said another muleteer, taking up the story, “I cannot precisely inform you; but that matters little; be satisfied that, in the narration of the story, *no se salga un punto de la verdad.*† As for the friar, he crawled to the nearest village, driving

* Chief magistrate, where there is no *Corregidor*.

† One does not depart a point from the truth.—*Don Quijote*.

before him all the cattle he encountered on the road, like mad things—asses braying—dogs barking ; and cows with their tails in the air as erect as palm trees. The inhabitants took the alarm ; and, snatching up their *niños* and *rosarios*, scampered off without listening to what the *Padre* was crying :—indeed the louder he hallooed to them to stop, the faster they ran ; for they all thought it was the devil that was at their heels.”—“And I believe think so to this day,” joined in another arriero, taking his cigar from his mouth, and rolling forth a long cloud of smoke—“for at last, the village priest, seizing upon a crucifix in one hand, and an *escopeta** in the other, and repeating a heap of *Ave Marias*, *Pater nostres*, and *credos*, went out to meet the beast. On getting within gunshot, he presented the *escopeta* (for I saw it myself, though he said afterwards it was the crucifix,) upon which the figure fell prostrate on the ground. So then the *Cura* went up to it, and, after a few minutes, beckoned the people forward, and told them how he had cast a devil out of a good Capuchin, and showed the skin and horns he had kept as trophies. The skin was cut up and sold to the bystanders for charms against the evil one ; and the friar was placed on an ass, and conveyed to the *Cura’s* dwelling, where he

* Fowling-piece.

remained until his feet were healed. He then returned to his convent, telling every body that he had been assailed by devils in the form of contrabandistas, and that a miracle had been wrought in his favour."

Here all crossed themselves — arrieros inclusive.

Others of the muleteers were bandying compliments with the crabbed old landlady ; one swearing that her wine was as sweet as her face ; another that her breath was more savoury than a *chorizo* ;* a third that his chocolate was less clear than her complexion : all which jokes she bore with stoical indifference, returning generally, however, a Rowland for an Oliver.

At length our supper was announced, and we betook ourselves to the loft, where we found four chairs and a low table had been added to the furniture. Our meal consisted of a stewed fowl, that had been pulled down from the roost before our eyes, not an hour before ; an omelet abounding in onion and garlic ; and, what we found far more palatable, ham and bread and butter, which we had taken care to come provided with.

I must not, however, omit to do justice to the Gaucin wine, which is excellent, and has much the flavour of a *sound* Niersteiner. The best is

* Black pudding.

grown on the side of the *Hacho*, or peaked mountain above the town.

All the wine of the Serrania is good, when not *flavoured* with aniseed; but it must be “drunk on the premises;” for the vile habit of carrying it in pig-skins is sure to give it some bad taste—either of the skin itself, if new, or of its preceding contents, (probably aniseed brandy) if old. I tried in vain to get some pure Guacin wine conveyed to Gibraltar, but it had always a “smack” of the unclean animal’s skin.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY TO RONDA CONTINUED—A WORD ON THE PASSPORT AND BILL OF HEALTH NUISANCES, AND SPANISH CUSTOM-HOUSE OFFICERS—ROMANTIC SCENERY—SPLENDID VIEW—BENADALID—ATAJATE—FIRST VIEW OF THE VALE OF RONDA—A DISSERTATION ON ADVENTURES, TO MAKE UP FOR THEIR ABSENCE—LUDICROUS INSTANCE OF THE EFFECTS OF PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE.

“*A quien madruga, Dios le ayuda,*”* is a common Spanish saying; and though our hard beds took off much from the merit of our early rising, it nevertheless brought its reward, by enabling us to witness a sunrise scene of most surpassing beauty.

Partaking of a cup of chocolate,—a breakfast that every Arriero indulges in,—a slice of bread fried in hog’s lard—which is a much better thing, and quite as wholesome, as *breakfast bacon*—we lit our cigars, paid our bill—a little fortune to the lady of the hostel—and bestrode our horses without more delay.

* God assists him who rises early.

In this part of Spain passports are not included amongst the drags upon travelling. You should be provided with one, in case of getting into trouble of any kind ; but, excepting during the prevalence of the cholera, I never, in any of my numerous peregrinations, was even asked to produce it. I happened at that particular period (1833) to have undertaken the journey from Gibraltar to Madrid. The disease was raging with fatal violence on the banks of the lower Guadalquivir, and, spreading Eastward, had appeared in various towns and villages at the foot of the Serranía de Ronda. At the same time, reports were rife of its existence at Malaga, Estepona, and other places situated on the shores of the Mediterranean. I had therefore to thread my way to Cordoba, (where I hoped to fall in with the diligence from Seville to the capital) through the heart of the Serranía, and was obliged in some cases to avoid particular towns lying in the direct route, because—though no suspicion existed of their being infected with the dreadful disease—they chanced to be within the limits of the kingdom of Seville, which was placed, *in toto*, under the ban of quarantine.

My passport, or, more properly speaking, my bill of health—for the political importance of the former yielded to the sanatory consequence of its more humble-looking adjunct — was then

in great request ; the entrance to every little village being interdicted, until the constituted authority had come forward to see that all was right. On one of these occasions, I found a beggar officiating as inspector of health and passports, and I must do him the justice to say, that he performed his duty in the most honourable manner, not asking for “*una limosnita par el amor de Dios*”* until he had carefully examined every part of the lengthy document, and pronounced it to be *corriente*. †

On another occasion, a swineherd was decorated with the yellow cockade and sword of office. In this instance, I thought the bill of the inn at San Roque (which I happened to have in my pocket-book) would answer every purpose, and save time. He examined it most gravely ; turned it over and over—for it was rather a long and a very illegible MS. — said it was perfectly correct, (a point on which we differed most materially) and dismissed me with a *vaya usted con Dios*. ‡

On my present tour, however, we experienced no obstructions of any sort ; for custom-house barriers, though now and then met with at the large towns, occasion no longer delay than a turnpike in England, and are as regularly paid ;

* A little charity, for the love of God.

† Quite correct.

‡ God go with you.

the *Aduanero* * holding out his hand as openly and confidently for the bribe, as the gatekeeper does for his toll.

It is scarcely possible to imagine more romantic and, at the same time, more varied scenery than that which presents itself between Gaucin and Ronda. For the greater part of the first three leagues † (full fourteen English miles) to Atajate, the road winds along the summit of a low mountain chain, (I speak only as compared with the height of the neighbouring Sierras) the western side of which slopes gracefully to the clear and tortuous Guadiaro, whilst the eastern falls abruptly to the dark and rapid Genal.

In some places, the width of the mountain ridge exceeds but little that of the road itself; enabling the traveller to embrace the two valleys at one glance, and compare their respective beauties. The difference between them is very

* Custom-house officer.

† There are various league measures in Spain.—1st. The *Legua geografica*, of which there are $17\frac{1}{4}$ in a degree of the meridian; 2ndly, the *Legua de Marina*, or of “an hour’s journey;” and 3rdly, the *Legua legal*. Of the two last, a degree contains 20 and $26\frac{1}{2}$ respectively. The leagues on the *post-roads* of Andalusia must be calculated at the second of these measures; that is, at three British statute miles, and 807 yards each: but on the cross roads the measurement depends upon whether the leagues are specified as being *largas*, *cortas*, or *regulares*, which may be computed at 5, 3, and 4 miles respectively, whilst that of “*una hora*” (an hour) may be reckoned like a post league, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ very nearly.

remarkable; for whilst the sides of both are clothed with the richest vegetation, yet the more gentle character of the one has encouraged the husbandman to devote his labour principally to the culture of corn, hemp, and the vine; whereas, the steep and broken banks of the other, being less accessible to the plough, are mostly planted with groves of fig, olive, chesnut, and almond trees; though vineyards are also pretty abundant. For the same reason, though both valleys are studded with villages, yet those along the sloping banks of the Guadiaro are large, and distant from each other; whilst, in the more contracted valley of the Genal, almost every isolated crag is occupied by a group of houses, or a dilapidated fortilage, mementoes of the Saracenic occupation; as the names, Benarrabá, Benastépar, Algatocin, Genalguacil, Benalhauría, Benadalid, &c. sufficiently attest. Beyond the valleys on either side, rise chains of rugged mountains; some covered to their very peaks with dark forests of pine and ilex; others rearing their pointed summits beyond the bounds of vegetation.

The eastern chain is that which borders the Mediterranean shore between Estepona and Marbella; the western is the yet more lofty Sierra that divides the waters of the Guadiaro and Guadalete; directing the former to the

Mediterranean, the latter to the Atlantic; and terminating in the ever-memorable headland of Trafalgar.

Through the passes between the huge peaks that break the summit of this bold range, an occasional glimpse may be caught of the low and far distant ground about Cadiz and Chiclana; but the view that most excites the traveller's admiration is obtained from a knoll on the road side, about three miles from Gaucin, looking back on that place, and down the verdant valley of the Genal.

The ruins of the old Moorish fortress occupy the right of the picture, the cragged ridge on which it is perched jutting boldly into the valley, and (uncheered by the sun's rays) standing out in fine relief from the bright, vine-clad slope of the impending *Sierra del Hacho*, and yet more distant mountains. To the left, the view is bounded by the rugged peaks of the *Sierra Cristellina*, from the foot of which a dense but variegated forest spreads entirely across the valley, wherein may here and there be traced the snake-like course of the impatient Genal.

Further on, the valley presents a wider opening; but the little stream still has to struggle for a passage amongst the wide spreading roots of the retiring mountains, which, overlapping each other in rapid succession,

present, for many miles, a most singularly furrowed country.

Calpe's fantastic peaks rear themselves above all these intermediate ridges, marking the boundary of Europe: whilst, to the left of the celebrated promontory, Ceuta may be seen, stretching far into the glassy Mediterranean, and to the right, the huge Sierra Bullones, (Apes hill) falling perpendicularly to the Straits of Gibraltar. In the extreme distance, the African mountains rise in successive ranges, until closed by the chain of the lower Atlas, the faint blue outline of which may be distinctly traced in this transparent atmosphere, although at a distance of at least one hundred miles.

It is a scene that amply repays the traveller for all the désagrémens of his night's lodging, and one which, numerous as were my visits to Gaucin, I always turned my back upon with regret. I do so even now, and proceed on to Ronda, leaving the villages of Algatocin and Benalhauría, situated on the side of the mountain, to the right of the road, and about pistol-shot from it; and in a few miles more, descending by a rough zig-zag track (something worse than a decayed staircase) towards the little town of Benidalid; which, with its picturesque castle, stands also somewhat off the road, and immediately under a lofty tor of decomposed

rock, distinguished by the name of the *Peñon de los Frailes*,* and seems doomed, some day or other, to have the holy mound upon its shoulders.

The next and last village on the road is Atajate, distant about ten miles from Ronda. It is nestled in a narrow pass, overhung on one side by the mountain chain along which the road has hitherto been conducted, (and which here begins to rise considerably above it) and on the other, by a conical crag, whose summit is occupied by the picturesque ruins of a Moorish fortress.

In former ages, the houses of the hardy mountaineers, clustered round the base of the little fastness, must have been secure from all attack; and even now the pass, which here cuts the direct communication between Gibraltar and Ronda, (and consequently Madrid) might be held against a very superior force.

Immediately after passing Atajate, the character of the scenery undergoes a complete change. The mountains become more rugged and arid, rising in huge masses some thousand feet above the road, and are tossed about in curious confusion. Patches of corn and flax are yet here and there to be seen, and the valley beneath is still clothed with cork and ilex; but the vineyards, olive grounds, and chesnut groves,

* Friar's rock.

have altogether disappeared, and the villages are far apart, and distant from the road.

On advancing some little way further, all traces of cultivation cease. The road,—if a collection of jagged blocks of granite can be so called,—traverses a succession of perilous ascents and descents; sometimes being conducted along the brink of an awful precipice, at others carried under huge masses of crumbling rock. Here and there may, nevertheless, be traced the remains of a paved road, that, in the days of Spain's pride, was made for the express purpose of transporting artillery and stores to the siege of Gibraltar. It is now—so sadly is Spain fallen!—purposely suffered to go to decay, lest it should offer facilities for making irruptions from that same fortress!

On drawing near the head of the valley, several narrow cut-throat passes present themselves, bringing forcibly to mind Don Quijote's speech to his faithful squire, on reaching the Puerto Lapice, “*Aqui, hermano Sancho, podemos meter las manos hasta los codos en esto que llaman aventuras.*”* But, on gaining the summit of the chain, the country becomes more open, and the traveller again breathes freely. A few meagre crops of corn are scattered here and there

* Here, brother Sancho, we may thrust our hands (arms?) up to the elbows in what are called adventures.

between the rocks, and the bells of the fathers of a herd of goats are heard tinkling amongst the gorse and palmeta that fringe the feet of the impending tors, bespeaking the vicinity of fellow man, and giving the traveller a pleasing consciousness of security, whilst he checks his horse to gaze on the splendid scene before him : for here the lovely basin of Ronda first bursts upon his view, rich as Ceres and Pomona can make it.

In the centre of the verdant plain, but crowning the summit of an isolated rocky eminence, stands the shining city,—its patched and crumbling walls telling of many a protracted siege and desperate assault. Beyond, the view is bounded by a range of wooded mountains, that forms the western barrier of the secluded basin, and up the rough sides of which, the roads to Cadiz, Seville, and Xeres, may be traced, winding their tedious way.

The descent to Ronda is long, and, from the badness of the road, extremely wearying. The whole distance from Gaucin (about 25 miles) occupied us seven hours.

I regret much that my reader should have had to accompany me over this savage and romantic country—the reputed *head-quarters* of banditti—without encountering a single adventure ; but the truth is, they are by no means

so plentiful as people have generally been led to believe. I may speak with some confidence on this point; since, independently of my long residence in the immediate vicinity of this wild tract—during which every well authenticated case of outrage and robbery came to my knowledge—I have by personal experience been able to form a pretty correct estimate of the amount of danger incurred by the traveller. I have traversed the country, however, in all directions, and at all seasons; in all characters, and in all dresses. I have gone on foot, on horseback, *en calesa*, (where the roads admitted of my so doing) alone, attended by a single servant, in parties of four, six, and eight:—as a sportsman, *en militaire*, as a peasant, as a *Majo*: and yet I never “met with an adventure.”

It is true, I have had many very narrow escapes—that is to say, judging from the information I invariably received—for never did I leave a *venta*, that I was not mysteriously told the road I was about to take was the most dangerous in the whole Serranía; that I should be sure to encounter *mala gente*; and that it was but a few days before, a robbery—perhaps murder—had taken place, on that very road, attended with most heart-rending and appalling circumstances! But a little cross-questioning soon convinced me that my informant knew

nothing of the who, the when, and the where, to which his tale referred ; and the story was always reduced to a shrug of the shoulders and a *se dice*.*

The plain truth is, that almost every one the traveller comes in contact with is, in some way or other, interested in spreading these reports to create alarm. The *Ventero*† has a natural disinclination to part with a good customer, and hopes either to persuade his guest to hire additional horses and guides, or to detain him whilst he seeks for further information. The guide finds it his interest to alarm his employer, if only *pour faire valoir ses services* in piloting him clear of these reported Scyllas and Charybdises. The Contrabandista tries to frighten the stranger, that he may learn which road he is travelling and what is his business ; the Arriero simply for his amusement.

The peasant alone has no purpose to serve in deceiving the traveller, neither has he any intention of so doing ; for he himself implicitly believes all the stories he hears, and repeats them with the usual notes and addenda of a second edition. He never stirs out of a circle of a league and a half from his dwelling — that is, beyond the range of his herd of goats, or the nearest

* So it is said.

† Publican.

market town — and he hears these tales repeated night after night, at the venta chimney-piece—each arriero trying to outdo his brother in the marvellous and horrible—until he becomes convinced of their veracity, and repeats them as well authenticated facts.

The state of the country is also such, that when a robbery actually is committed—and such crimes will be perpetrated in the best regulated countries—the traveller hears of it from so many different people, but related with such various attendant circumstances, and stated to have occurred in so many different places, that he naturally multiplies it into a dozen at least. It is in this way that foreigners, who in general know but little of the language, and still less of the topography, of the country, become dupes to this system of deception, and adopt in consequence a most unfavourable opinion of Spanish honesty; regarding every fierce-looking fellow, with piercing black eyes, a three days' beard, and a long knife stuck in his sash, as a robber; and every Cross on the road side as the *memento mori* of some way-laid traveller. Whereas, in point of fact, if this mountainous and intricate tract were peopled by our own more highly educated and civilized countrymen, I fear—in spite of our vigilant and, it must be confessed, admirable police—we

should be liable to have our pockets picked in a much less delicate and unobtrusive manner, than is now practised in the streets of London.

That robberies and murders have taken place in this part of Spain, and sometimes been attended with most revolting cruelty, is most true; but they have almost always been perpetrated at a time that some unusual political excitement agitated the country, unnerving the arm of power, and even—as has often been the case—placing the civil authorities at the mercy of a ruffian band of undisciplined soldiers.

I regret, however, as before said, that though I courted adventure in every possible way, (as I think must be admitted) yet my suit was always unsuccessful; and since I cannot interest my reader with any account of my own personal risks, I will endeavour to amuse him, with the imaginary dangers of some of my countrymen, which at the same time will serve to show how easily a few simple words may, through ignorance of the language of the country, be made to tell a tale of direful import.

The occurrence to which I allude took place not many years since, when the country round Gibraltar was infested by a band of robbers, headed by a notorious miscreant named *José Maria*. Moving about from place to place with extraordinary rapidity, these scoundrels com-

pletely baffled all pursuit, but of course gave a wide berth to the garrisons of San Roque and Algeciras; so that the English officers were not deterred from sallying forth from Gibraltar with their fox-hounds, and pursuing the favourite national sport.

On one occasion, however, Renard had led them close upon the border of the Almoraima forest, and some of the party—perhaps a little “*thrown out*”—were making a short cut across a field of young barley, when, the owner of the thriving crop, perceiving the mischief the horses’ hoofs were doing, and unconscious of the value of the words “*ware corn*,” cried lustily out to the red-coated gentry, in his own vernacular—“*Fuera!—Jesús! María! Josef! mi cibada! mi cañamo! todo, se echarà à perder!*”*

The wave of the arm that accompanied this exclamatory “*Fuera!*” clearly implied, *be off*; and the sportsmen, full of the exploits of the dread bandit, translating the words “*Jesus, María José,*” “*By the Lord, here’s José María;*” naturally concluded that the remainder of the sentence, (pronounced with much gesticulation) could mean nothing but save yourselves, or you’ll be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Not waiting, therefore, to lose

* Off!—Jesus! María! Joseph! —my barley! my hemp! every thing will be destroyed!

time in questions, they set spurs to their horses, and rode *ventre à terre* into the English garrison.

Now the wonderful echo of Killarney is a joke compared to the reverberation that a story is sent back with, from the "four corners" in the High Street of Gibraltar. Accordingly, a report was soon spread, that *José Maria* had come down close to the Spanish lines, and made a capture of the "whole field," — hounds, huntsmen, and whipper-in inclusive!

A statement of the case was instantly forwarded by an express boat to the Spanish General commanding at Algeciras; who, rejoicing at the opportunity of capturing the miscreant band which had so long eluded his vigilance, forthwith despatched "horse, foot, and dragoons," to scour the country in all directions.

Of course their search was fruitless; but the laughable mistake that had occurred, from simply making *José* and *Maria* change places, was discovered only on the return of the other sportsmen, who, after "a capital run," had secured Master Renard's services for another occasion.

CHAPTER V.

THE BASIN OF RONDA—SOURCES OF THE RIVER GUADIARO—REMARKABLE CHASM THROUGH WHICH IT FLOWS—CITY OF RONDA—DATE OF ITS FOUNDATION—FORMER NAMES—GENERAL DESCRIPTION—CASTLE—BRIDGES—SPLENDID SCENERY—PUBLIC BUILDINGS—AMPHITHEATRE—POPULATION—TRADE—SMUGGLING—WRETCHED STATE OF THE COMMERCE, MANUFACTURES, AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS OF SPAIN, AND EVILS AND INCONVENIENCE RESULTING THEREFROM—RARE PRODUCTIONS OF THE BASIN OF RONDA—AMENITY OF ITS CLIMATE—AGREMENS OF THE CITY—EXCELLENT SOCIETY—CHARACTER OF ITS INHABITANTS.

THE basin of Ronda is situated in the very heart of a labyrinth of rough and arid sierras, which, distinguished, *par excellence*, by the name of the *Serrania de Ronda*, may be described as the gnarled and wide-spreading roots of the great mountain ridge, that, traversing Spain diagonally, divides the affluents to the Mediterranean from those to the Atlantic, and finally unites with, and becomes a branch of, the Pyrenean chain.

This singularly secluded and romantic valley is about eight miles in length and five wide,

and, though sunk deep below the mountain ridges that girt it in on every side, is at least 1500 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. Its soil is rich, and is rendered peculiarly fertile by the numerous sources of the Guadiaro, which traverse it in all directions. The name of this river—composed of the Arabic words, *Guada al diar*—signifies, water of the houses; an appellation it probably obtained, from the number of habitations that are said to have lined its productive banks in former days.

The principal branch of this mountain stream takes its rise to the eastward of Ronda, amongst some curiously jagged and fantastic peaks, on which have most appropriately been bestowed the name of the “Old Woman’s Teeth,” (*Dientes de la Vieja.*) Escaped from their fangs, the gurgling rivulet, increased by numerous tributary streams, directs its course more leisurely through the vale, winding its way amongst luxuriant vineyards, orchards, olive grounds, and corn-fields, until it reaches the foot of the crag, on which, as has before been stated, stands the city of Ronda. Here it would appear that nature had, in early ages, presented a barrier to the further progress of the stream; as a rocky ledge stretches quite across the bed of this portion of the valley, and, most probably, by damming up the waters

poured down from the mountain ravines, formed a lake on its eastern side. But, gathering strength from resistance, the little mountain torrent eventually worked itself an outlet, and now rushes foaming through a deep, narrow chasm, leaping from precipice to precipice, until, the rocky barrier forced, it once more reaches a level country.

On either side of the fearful chasm — or *Tajo*, as it is called in the language of the country—which the persevering torrent has thus worked in the rocky ledge, stands the city of Ronda ; one portion of which, encircled by an old embattled wall, that overhangs the southern cliff of the fissure, is distinguished as the Old Town, and as the site of a Roman city ; whilst the more widely spread buildings on the opposite bank bear the name of *El Mercadillo*,* or New Town.

The present walls of the old town were evidently raised by the Saracens, and no traces are perceptible of any others having occupied their place. Nevertheless, it can hardly be supposed that so eligible a site for a station would have been overlooked by the Romans ; and the Spanish antiquaries have accordingly determined it to be the position of *Arunda* (one of the cities mentioned by Pliny as situated in that

* Little market.

part of Bœtica inhabited by the *Celtici*) — a conclusion which both its present name and the discovery of many ancient Roman inscriptions and statues in its vicinity tend to confirm. Some, however, maintain that Ronda is the site of the Munda, under whose walls was sealed the fate of the sons of Pompey. But the adjacent country ill agrees with the description of it handed down to us; and the little town of Monda, situated near the Mediterranean shore, is more generally admitted to have been the scene of Julius Cæsar's victory *.

However the case may be, this city, under the domination of the Moors, became one of their principal strongholds; for having, with various other cities, been ceded by Ishmael King of Granada to the Emperor of Fez — whose aid against the storm gathering in Castille (A.D. 1318) he deemed essential for the preservation of his newly-acquired throne — it was some few years afterwards, with Algeciras, Ximena, Marbella, and Gibraltar,† formed into a kingdom for that emperor's son, *Abou Melic*; and this prince, passing over into Spain, (A.D.

* On this subject see further at Chapter XV., vol. II.

† Gibraltar was recaptured from the Spaniards by *Abou Melic*, the year following his arrival in Spain; and he assumed the title of King of Ronda, Algeciras, and Gibraltar.—He fell at the battle of Arcos, where his army was completely routed by that of Alphonso the Eleventh, commanded by the Grand Master of Calatrava, A.D. 1339.

1331) established his court at Ronda ; building a splendid palace there, and, according to the usual custom of the Moors, erecting a formidable castle on the highest pinnacle of the rocky mound. The natural defences of the city were also strengthened by a triple circuit of walls, rendering it almost impregnable.

The Moorish name given to the place was *Hisnorrendi*, the laurelled castle ; but, on returning to the hands of the Spaniards, (A.D. 1485) it assumed its present mongrel appellation ; in which its etymological claims upon the Celtic and Arabic languages are pretty equally balanced, as the following old couplet partly illustrates ;—

*Y con el tiempo se ha desbaratado
El Hisna Randa, y Ronda se ha llamado.**

The existing circumvallation is very irregular, and embraces little more than the mere summit of the rocky ledge on which the city stands ; confining it consequently within very narrow limits. Its length, however, is considerable ; and at its southern extremity, where the ground slopes more gradually to the narrow gorge that connects it with the neighbouring mountains, a triple line of outworks continues yet to supply the want of the natural walls which elsewhere render the place so difficult of access.

* And, in the course of time, the *Hisna* trimming (Randa) has been torn off, and the place called Ronda.

On the crest of the ridge overlooking these advanced works, stands the shell of the capacious castle; or Royal Palace, as it is called. Its solid walls and vaulted chambers denote it to have been a work of great strength. It is now, however, but a vast heap of ruins; the French, on finally evacuating Ronda in 1812, having destroyed the principal part of it.

The only entrance to the city, from the country, is through a succession of gates, in the before-mentioned outworks, the last of which is immediately under the walls of the old palace. From this gate, a long and narrow, but tolerably straight street, traverses the city from south to north, terminating at the upper or new bridge, and being nearly three quarters of a mile in length. This street is lined with handsome shops, and from it, numerous alleys (for they deserve no better name) lead off right and left, winding and turning in all directions, and communicating with numberless little courts, crooked passages, and *culs de sac*; quite in the style of an eastern city.

In wandering through this labyrinth, the perplexed topographer is astonished to find a number of remarkably handsome houses. In fact, it is the *Mayfair* of Ronda -- the aristocratic location of all the *Hidalguía** of the

* Gentry—from *Hidalgo* (*Higo de algo*). *Son of Somebody*.

province;—who, proud of the little patch of land their forefathers' swords conquered from the accursed Moslems, would as soon think of denying the infallibility of the Pope, as of taking up their abode amongst the mercantile inhabitants of the mushroom suburb.

The New Town, however, I must needs confess,—despite all aristocratic predilections,—is by far the most agreeable place of residence.

The principal streets are wide, and tolerably straight; it contains some fine open *plazas* or squares; and although the houses are thus more exposed to the influence of the sun, yet, from the same cause, they enjoy a freer circulation of air. The absence of an enclosing wall tends also, in point of coolness, to give the *Mercadillo* an advantage over the city; leaving it open to receive the full benefit of the refreshing breezes that sweep down from the neighbouring mountains.

But, though destitute of battlements, the New Town is nearly as difficult of approach, and as incapable of expansion, as the walled city itself; for, bounded on its south side by the deep *Tajo*, and to the west, by an almost equally formidable cliff that branches off from it, its eastern limits are determined by a rocky ledge that extends diagonally towards the *Guadiaro*; thus leaving the access free only on its north side.

The ground in all directions falls more or less rapidly inwards ; and the town, thus spread over it, assumes the form of an amphitheatre, looking into the rocky bed of the Guadiaro.

There are three bridges across the river, communicating between the two towns : the first — a work of the Moors—connects the suburb of San Miguel, situated at the lowest part of the New Town, with some tanneries and other buildings standing outside the walls of the ancient city. It is very narrow, and being thrown over the stream just before it enters the dark fissure, does not exceed forty feet in height. The second crosses the chasm at a single span, where its banks have already attained a considerable elevation, and affords an entrance to the Old Town by a gateway in the N.E. corner of its present walls. The last and principal bridge is a noble, though somewhat heavy structure of much more recent date than the others, and furnishes an excellent specimen of the bold conception and peculiar taste of the Spaniards of the last century. It is thrown across the chasm where its precipitous banks have attained their greatest elevation, and its parapet is 280 feet above the stream that flows beneath, and nearly 600 above the level of the plain to which it is hastening.

A bridge was erected at this same spot a

hundred years back,* which spanned the frightful fissure in one arch, and must have been one of the boldest works of the kind, ever (up to that time) undertaken ; since its diameter could not have been less than 150 feet. Unfortunately, the workmanship was in some way defective, (or more probably the foundation,) and it fell down but a few years after its completion. The present structure was then commenced, which, if not so airy and picturesque as the former must have been, possesses the more solid qualities of safety and durability.

This bridge also spans the lower portion of the fissure in one arch, springing from solid buttresses that rest on the rocky bed of the torrent. But, as the chasm widens rapidly, this first arch is merely carried sufficiently high to admit of the free passage of the stream at all seasons, and is then surmounted by a second, of the same span but much greater elevation ; and the massive buttresses on either side are lightened in appearance by being pierced with arches to correspond — thus making the bridge consist of three arches above and one below.

The view from the parapet of this bridge is quite enchanting. The sensation of giddiness that seizes the spectator on first leaning over

* A.D. 1735. Part of this bold arch is yet visible.

the yawning abyss, leaves a feeling of pleasurable excitement, similar to that produced by a slight shock of a galvanic battery. The distant roar of the foaming torrent also warns him of his perilous height; but the solid nature of the bounding wall quickly removes all feeling of insecurity, and allows him, whilst he rests against it, to enjoy at his leisure the noble view before him, in which are combined the rich and varied tints of a southern clime, with the bold outlines and wild beauties of an Alpine region. The view looking over the Eastern parapet of the bridge is of a more gloomy character than that from the opposite side, but is equally grand and imposing. In the bottom of the dark fissure—which here the sun’s rays seldom reach—the transparent rivulet may be tracked, winding its way leisurely through the tortuous channel; here and there interrupted in its course by masses of fallen rock, and partially overshadowed by trees and creepers; whilst its precipitous banks, from whose rugged surface it might be supposed no vegetation could possibly spring, are thickly covered with the *higo chumbo*,* (prickly pear) amongst whose thorny boughs numerous ragged urchins may be seen—almost suspended in air—intent on obtaining their favourite fruit. Beyond the dark tajo, the sun

* *Ficus indica*.

shines on the green fields and vineyards of the fertile plain; and yet further behind are the low wooded sierras that bound the vale of Ronda to the north.

The City can boast of few public buildings to excite the interest of a stranger. The churches are numerous, and gaudily fitted up; but they contain neither paintings nor statuary of any merit. In the New Town, on the other hand, are the Theatre—a small but conveniently fitted up edifice—the Stables of the *Real Maestranza* ;* and the *Plaza de los Toros* ; which latter, though not so large as those of the principal cities of the Province, is certainly one of the handsomest in Spain. It is built of stone, and nearly of a circular form, and is capable of containing 10,000 persons. The roof is continued all round; which is not the case in most amphitheatres; and it is supported by a colonnade of 64 pillars of the Tuscan order. The greatest diameter of the *Arena* is 190 feet, which is precisely the *width* of that of the Flavian Amphitheatre at Rome. The internal economy of the bull-fighting establishment is well worthy the observation of those who are curious in such matters; being very complete and well ordered,

* A body corporate of the nobility, whose province is chiefly to encourage the breed of horses.—The present male competitor for the crown of Spain was Grand Master of the R. Maestranza of Ronda, during the lifetime of Ferdinand VII.

though not now kept up in the style of by-gone days.

The two towns together contain about 16,000 inhabitants, who are principally employed in agricultural and horticultural pursuits; though there are several manufactories of hats, two or three tanneries, and numerous water-mills.

Ronda is a place of considerable commerce; its secluded and at the same time central situation adapting it peculiarly for an emporium for smuggled goods; in which, it may be said, the present trade of Spain entirely consists. The vicinity of Gibraltar and Cadiz; the impracticable nature of the country between those ports and along the Mediterranean shore; the difficult and intricate mountain paths that traverse it (known only to the smugglers); and the wretched state of the national army and Navy; all tend to favour the contraband trade; and more especially that of Ronda, where the same facilities present themselves for getting smuggled goods *away from* the place, as of bringing them from the coast to it.

It is lamentable blindness on the part of the Spanish government, — considering the deplorable state of the manufactures of the country; of the “shipping interest;” of the roads and other means of inland communication; and, to crown all, I may add, of the

finances,—not to see the advantage that would accrue from lowering the duties on foreign produce ; on tobacco, cocoa, and manufactured goods in particular, which may be considered as absolute necessities to all classes of Spaniards. By so doing, not only would the present demoralising system of smuggling be put an end to,—since it would then be no longer a profitable business,—but the money which now clings to the fingers of certain venal authorities of the Customs, or finds its way into the pockets of the Troops* and Sailors employed on the preventive service, in the way of bribes, would then stand some chance of reaching the public treasury.

The sums thus iniquitously received (and willingly paid by the smugglers) amounts to a charge of 15 per cent. on the value of the prohibited articles ; a duty to that amount, or even something beyond, would therefore readily be paid, to enable the purchaser to take his goods openly into the market. The trade would thus

* It was no unusual thing to send Regiments, that were very much in arrears of pay, to garrison the lines in front of Gibraltar ; and so well was the reason of their being sent there understood, that sometimes they would take the settlement of accounts *into their own hands*. I recollect the Regiment of *La Princesa* refusing—Officers and Men—to embark for Ceuta, because they had not been allowed to remain long enough before Gibraltar to pay themselves. The regiment was permitted to remain three months longer, and at the expiration of that time embarked perfectly satisfied : a rare instance of *moderation*.

fall into more respectable hands ; competition would increase ; and the sellers would be satisfied with smaller profits. This would naturally lead to an increased demand, and the revenue would be proportionably benefited.

The obsolete notions that wed the Spaniards to their present faulty system are, first, that, by opening the trade to foreign powers, their own country would be drained of its specie, in which they seem to think the riches of a nation consist ; and secondly, that the national manufactures would be ruined, if not protected by the imposition of high duties on those of other countries.

The fallacy of these ideas is evident ; for it would not be possible to devise any plan by which money could be kept in a country, when the articles that country stands in need of are to be bought cheaper elsewhere ; and it is futile to suppose—as, however, is fondly imagined—that Spain's doubloons go only to her colonies, to be brought back in taxation, or for the purchase of the produce of the mother country. As well might *we* imagine that Zante alone could furnish England with her Christmas consumption of Currants, as that Cuba and the Philippine Islands (all the Colonies worth enumerating that Spain now possesses) could supply her with tobacco, cocoa, and cinnamon.

And, as the above-mentioned articles are as much necessaries of life in Spain, as tea and sugar—not to say the aforesaid currants—are in England, the deficiency, *coute qui coute*, must be made good somewhere; and consequently Spanish money will have to be expended in procuring what is wanting.

A much greater evil than this, however, is occasioned by the enormously high duty placed by the Mother-Country on these very articles, the produce of her dependencies; so that even her own colonial produce is smuggled to her through the hands of foreigners!

With respect to the favour shown and encouragement given to her own manufactures, by the prohibitory duties imposed on those of other nations, it must be evident to any one at all acquainted with the state of the inland communications of Spain, that the country is not in a sufficiently advanced state of civilization to warrant its engaging in such undertakings with any prospect of success. The Factories that are already in existence cannot supply clothing for one fourth part of the population of the country; to which circumstance alone are they indebted for being able to continue at work; for if the number were increased, all would inevitably fail. The same cause, therefore, here also exists, to encourage smuggling, as in the

case of the consumable articles, tobacco, splices, &c.—viz. the necessity of finding a supply to meet the demand.

It is quite surprising that, for such a length of time, and under so many different administrations, Spain should have continued thus blind to her own interest. But, without going the length I have suggested, much good might be effected, by merely giving up the farming out the taxes and various monopolies, and by putting a stop to sundry other abuses, such as the sale of places, by which the Crown revenues are principally raised.

If the present faulty system were abandoned, —by which a few individuals only are enriched to the prejudice of the rest of the community,—numerous speculators would be found ready to embark their capitals in mining operations, in the construction of railroads, canals, &c. which would be productive of incalculable benefit to the country; for, by such means, the produce of the fertile plains in the interior of Spain would be able to come with advantage into the foreign market; whilst the varied productions of this fruitful country, by being distributed throughout its provinces with a more equal hand, would be within the reach, and add to the comforts of all classes of its inhabitants.

At the present day, such is the want of these

means of communication, that it frequently happens an article which is plentifully produced in one province is absolutely difficult to procure in another. One province, for instance, has wine, but wants bread; another has corn, but not any wood; a third abounds in pasture, but has no market for its cheese, butter, &c. thus rendering the cattle it possesses of comparatively little value.

From the same cause, large tracts of land lie waste in many parts of Spain, because the crops they would yield, if cultivated, would not pay the cost of transport, even to the adjoining province; and a prodigious quantity of wine is annually destroyed, (a cruel fate from which even the divine *Val de Peñas* is not exempt!) because the casks and pig-skins containing it are of more value, on the spot where the wine is grown, than is the wine itself. What remains unsold, therefore, at the end of the year, is frequently poured into the street, in order that the casks may be available for the new wine.—Such would also be the fate of all the *light* wines grown on the banks of the Guadalete, but that the vicinity of Port St. Mary and Cadiz makes it worth the grower's while to prepare them with brandy and stronger bodied wines, to bear the rolling over the Bay of Biscay.

In an article of produce so readily trans-

ported as barley, I have known the price of a *fanega** vary no less than four *reales vellon*† on the opposite sides of the same chain of mountains; and I have seen Barbary wheat selling at Gibraltar, for one third less than corn of Spanish growth could be purchased at San Roque. This certainly would not be the case, if the riches of Spain could be distributed more easily over the whole face of the country; and since the demand for exportation would thereby be greatly increased, more industrious habits would be engendered, and an important step would thus be made towards civilization.

I must not, however, enlarge on this subject; otherwise, (besides peradventure wearying my reader) I shall certainly incur the displeasure of my quondam acquaintances of the Serrania; since any thing that may be suggested to induce the Spanish government to place the commerce of the country on a more liberal footing, would be most unfavourably viewed by the rude inhabitants of the Ronda mountains; who—their present profitable occupation ceasing—would be obliged to take to their spades and pruning-knives, and labour for a livelihood in their fields and olive groves. The inhabitants, however, of the favoured basin of

* A bushel nearly.

† A real vellon is equal to 2½ pence.

Ronda, would rather benefit by the change ; the produce of their orchards being so rare, as to be in great request all over the country. It is also worthy of remark, that, whilst the sugar-cane succeeds on the plains about Malaga, this elevated mountain valley, situated under the same parallel of latitude, enjoys a climate that enables it to produce apples, cherries, plums, peaches, and other stone fruits, that are more properly natives of central Europe, but which can hardly be excelled either in England or France.

The climate is also considered so favourable to longevity, that it has become a common saying in the country—

*En Ronda los hombres
de ochenta años son pollones.**

But although, even on such tempting terms, one would hardly consent to pass one's entire life at Ronda, yet I scarcely know a place where a few weeks may be more agreeably spent. The Inns are not good; though that bearing the name of the *Holy Trinity*—to which in my various visits I always bent my steps, until I could find a suitable lodging—is clean, and its keepers are honest and obliging. Lodgings are abundant, and, for Spain, very good ; the great

* At Ronda even an Octogenarian is a Chicken.

influx of strangers during the period of the fair having induced the inhabitants to fit up their houses purposely for their accommodation, and given them also some notion of what English travellers require, besides four bare walls, a roof overhead, and a mattress on the floor; the usual sum total of accommodation furnished at Spanish inns and lodging-houses.

The society of this place is particularly good; a number of the most ancient families of Andalusia having congregated here; who, with all the polish of the first circle of Spanish society, are exempt from the demoralizing vices which distinguish that of Madrid and other large cities.

It was only on the occasion of my second visit to the little Capital of the *Serranía*, that I was so fortunate as to be the bearer of letters of introduction to the principal families; and nothing could possibly exceed the kind attentions they pressed upon me. Their friendly hospitality was even extended, on my account, to all the English officers who, like myself, had been attracted to Ronda by the fame of its cattle fair and bull fights, and whom I was requested to invite to the balls, &c., which at that festive period were given nightly at their different houses. Nor did their kindness cease there; for I afterwards received pressing invitations

to visit them, as well at Ronda as at the neighbouring *watering-places*, to which they are in the habit of resorting during the summer months ; for the Spanish fashionables—like those of other climes—deem it essential to their well being to migrate periodically to these rendezvous for dancing and dòsing.

One of the most *remarkable* as well as most delightful families of Ronda, is that of *Holgado y Montezuma*. It is lineally descended from the last Cacique of Mexico, whose name it bears, and whose character and features I almost fancied were to be recognized in the somewhat haughty eye, and occidental cast of countenance, of the present head of the family.

The lower orders of inhabitants have, amongst travellers, the credit of being a fierce, intractable race ; but this character is by no means merited, and belongs altogether to the savage mountaineers of the Serranía. Indeed, these latter hold the industrious artizans, and the peasants of the city and plain, in great contempt, and it is a common maledictory expression amongst them—

*En Ronda mueras
acarreando zaques.**

This saying originated in the occupation of bringing up skins of water from the bed of the

* May you die at Ronda, bearing pig-skins.

river,—to which labour the christian captives were condemned, when the city was possessed by the Moslems—and still continues to be made use of, in allusion to the ignoble life of labour led by the peaceful inhabitants.

CHAPTER VI.

RONDA FAIR — SPANISH PEASANTRY — VARIOUS COSTUMES — JOCKEYS AND HORSES — LOVELY VIEW FROM THE NEW ALAMEDA — BULL FIGHTS — DEFENCE OF THE SPANISH LADIES — MANNER OF DRIVING THE BULLS INTO THE TOWN — FIRST ENTRANCE OF THE BULL — THE FRIGHTENED WATERSELLER — THE MINA, OR EXCAVATED STAIRCASE — RUINS OF ACINIPPO — THE CUEVA DEL GATO — THE BRIDGE OF THE FAIRY.

THE fair which is held annually at Ronda, in the month of May, collects an astonishing concourse of people from all parts of the country, and offers an excellent opportunity for seeing the peculiar costumes of the different provinces, as well as for observing the various shades of character of their respective inhabitants. The national costume, (speaking generally of it) is, without dispute, extremely becoming; for, not only does it set off to advantage such as are naturally well formed, but it conceals the defects of those to whom Dame Nature has been less kind; making them appear stout, well built fellows — in their own expressive words, “*bien*,

plantado"*—when, in point of fact, it oft-times happens that their slender legs have enough to do to bear the weight of the spare and ill-formed bodies placed upon them.

This is very perceptible when, deprived of their broad-brimmed *Sombreros* and stout leather *botines*, the peasantry come to be capped and trousered in a military garb. To a stranger, indeed, it must appear that the Spanish troops are collected from the very refuse of the population of the country; so miserable is their look. But the truth is, the conscription (by which the Army is raised) is levied with great fairness; and to the change of dress alone, therefore, must the falling off in their appearance be attributed.

The Spanish peasant, moreover, is the only one in Europe,† whose *tenue* is not improved by the drill serjeant; which may be accounted for by his not, like those of other countries, having been accustomed in his youth to carry burthens upon his *shoulders*. He consequently bends under the new weight of a musket and knapsack, which, so placed, he cannot but find particularly irksome.

To return, however, to the crowded city; whilst Ronda fair thus periodically furnishes the occasion for a general muster of the natives of

* Well planted.

† The Greek peasant may also perhaps be excepted.

all classes, the *Fair* of Ronda may claim the merit of holding out to them the inducement to display their figures and wardrobes to the best advantage ; and strange are the ways, and various the means, by which the Andaluz *Majo** seeks to win the sweet smiles or dazzle the bright eyes of his tinsel-loving countrywomen.

Amongst the numerous varieties of the genus *Majo*, that claiming the first rank may be readily known, by the *seeming* wish to avoid rather than to court admiration. Thus, the rich waist-coat of bright silk or costly velvet, studded with buttons innumerable of the most exquisite gold or silver filigree, is partially concealed, though rendered more brilliant, by the jacket of dark cloth simply ornamented with black braid and tags, which is worn over it ; whilst the plain white kerchief that protrudes from either side-pocket requires to be closely examined, to make the extreme delicacy of its texture apparent.

Others, of more gaudy and questionable taste, hold peagreens and lavenders to be more becoming ; and here and there an ultra dandy may be seen, aping the bull-fighter, and bedizened with gold and silver lace ; but he is of an inferior caste, and may generally be set down as a *Chevalier d'Industrie*.

* The word *Majo* originally signified Bravo, or Bully, but is now applied to such as court distinction by an extravagant style of dress. It is almost confined to the South of Spain.

Another class of the genus is distinguished by the glossy jacket of black goat-skin. The wearers of this singular costume are the *Ganaderos*, or cattle owners; whilst those satisfied with the more humble dresses, of brown or white sheep-skin—by no means the least picturesque of the motley crowd—belong to the shepherd tribe.

The breeches and gaiters undergo as many varieties as those above specified of the upper garments; but almost all who thus appear in the national costume wear the *sombrero*, or broad-brimmed hat with a high conical crown; the *Montera*—a low flat cap, made of black velvet, and ornamented with silk tassels—being now used only by the bull-fighters, and some elderly sticklers for old hats as well as old habits.

Many scowling fellows, enveloped in capacious cloaks, seemed to have no object in view but to examine with searching eyes the persons of the assembled multitude, and to conceal as much as possible their own from counter observation; and some of the savage mountaineers,—whom nothing but a bull fight, or perhaps the hope of plunder, could draw from their mountain fastnesses,—gave evident signs of never before having seen the British uniform.

I may observe here, *en passant*, that a few

robberies are generally *heard of*, at the breaking up of the fair; the temptation of well filled pockets and bales of merchandize drawing all the *ladrones* of the surrounding mountains down to the high roads.

The cattle fair is held on a rocky plain beyond the northern limits of the New Town. It is not so celebrated as some others held on the banks of the Guadalquivir; the narrow stony tracts across the mountains being both inconvenient for driving cattle, and injurious to their feet. Nevertheless, it offers a good opportunity for swapping “a *Haca*,”* though Spanish jockeys—like all others—must be dealt with according to their own proverb—*à picaro, picaro y medio.*† The horses of the South of Spain are small, hardy animals, well suited to the mountain roads of the country, but possessing no claims to beauty, beyond a lively head and a sleek coat. The Spaniards, by the way, have a strange prejudice in favour of *Roman-nosed* horses. They not only admire the *Cabeza de Carnero*, (sheep’s head) as they call it, but maintain that it is a certain indication of the animal being a “good one.” I presume, therefore, the

* *Haca*—a Pony—though the term is applied to horses of all sorts. Our word *hack* is evidently derived therefrom, and *Hackney* from *Hacanea*, the diminutive of *Haca*.

† To a rogue, a rogue and a half.

protuberance must be the organ of *ambulativeness*.

I was much mortified to find that “Almanzor,” whose finely finished head, straight forehead, sparkling eye, and dilated nostril, I certainly thought entitled him to be considered the handsomest of his kind in the fair, was looked upon as a very ordinary animal.

*No ai vasija que mida los gustos, ni balanza que los iguale,** as Guzman de Alfarache says; and my taste will certainly be disputed in other matters besides horseflesh by all Spaniards, when I confess to having frequently retired from the busy throng of the fair, or abstained from witnessing the yet more exciting bull fight, to enjoy, without fear of interruption, the lovely view obtained from the shady walks of the new *Alameda*.† This delightful promenade is situated at the further extremity of the modern town, overhanging the precipice which has been mentioned as bounding it to the west. The view is similar to that obtained from the parapet of the bridge; but here, the eye ranges over a greater extent of country, commanding the whole of the southern portion of the fertile val-

* There is no vessel to measure tastes, nor scales, by which they can be tried.

† The public walk of every Spanish town is so called.—The word is derived from *Alamo*, a poplar.

ley, and taking in the principal part of the mountain chain that encompasses it.

For hours together have I sat on the edge of the precipice, receiving the refreshing westerly breeze, and feasting my eyes on the beauteous scene beneath; tracing the windings of the serpent streamlet, and watching the ever-changing tints and shadows, cast by the sun on the deeply-furrowed sides of the mountains, as he rolled on in his diurnal course. All nature seemed to be at rest; not a human being could be seen throughout the wide vale; not a sound came up from it, save now and then the bay of some vigilant watch dog, or the call of the parent partridge to her infant brood. Its carefully irrigated gardens, its neatly trimmed vineyards, and, here and there, a low white cottage peeping through blossoming groves of orange and lemon trees, bore evidence of its being fertilized by the hand of man: but where are its inhabitants? nay, where are those of the city itself, whose boisterous mirth but lately rent the air! All is now silent as the grave: the cries of showmen have ceased. The tramp of horses and the lowing of cattle are heard no longer; the Thebaic St. Anthony, himself could not have been more solitary than I found myself.—But, hark. What sound is that? a buz of distant *vivas* is borne through the air! — It

proceeds from the crowded circus—the *Matador* has made a successful thrust — his brave antagonist bites the dust, and he is rewarded with a shower of *pesetas*,* and those cries of triumph ! —I regret not having missed witnessing his prowess ! but the declining sun tells me that my retreat is about to be invaded ; the glorious luminary sinks below the horizon, and the walk is crowded with the late spectators of the poor bull's last agonies.

“*Jesus !† Don Carlos*”—would exclaim many of my bright eyed-acquaintances — “ why were you not at the Bull fight ?”—“ I could not withdraw myself from this lovely spot.”—“ Well, *no ai vasija que mida los gustos*.... You might see this at any other time.” There was no replying to such an indisputable fact, but by another equally incontrovertible—viz.—“ The sun sets but once a day.”

The Bull-fights of Ronda are amongst the best of Spain ; the animals being selected from the most pugnacious breeds of Utrera and Ta-

* A small silver coin.

† Revoltingly as this exclamation from a lady's mouth would sound to “ears polite” in England, yet it is in common use, even in the first circle of Spanish Society. The different manner of pronouncing the J, making it *Hèsus*, mitigates in some degree the disgust with which it cannot but be heard by Englishmen : the word appearing to have a different import, as it were, until the ear becomes accustomed to its use. The vulgarisms of one nation are often thus passed over by another,—most fortunately in some instances,—for with married couples it frequently happens this “ignorance is bliss.”

rifa ; the *Picadores* from the most expert horsemen of Xeres and Cordoba ; the *Matadores* from the most skilful operators of Cadiz and Seville ; and the whole arrangement of the sports being under the superintendence of the Royal *Maestranza*. During the fair there are usually three *Corridas*,* at each of which, eight bulls are slaughtered.

A Bull-fight has been so often described that I will content myself with offering but very few remarks upon the disgusting, barbarous, exciting, interesting sport,—for such it successively becomes, to those who can be persuaded to witness it a second, third, and fourth time.

In the first place, I cannot admit, that it is a bit more cruel than an English bull-bait (I speak only from hearsay of the latter), or more disgusting than a pugilistic contest ; which latter, whatever pity it may occasion to see human nature so debased, can certainly possess little to *interest* the spectator, beyond the effect its termination will have upon his *betting-book*.

Oh !—I hear many of my countrymen exclaim —“I do not complain so much of the cruelty practised on the bulls, or the dangers incurred by the men. The former were made to be killed for our use ; the latter are free agents,

* Literally—Courses.

and enter the arena from choice. I feel only for the poor horses, exposed to be gored and tortured by an infuriated animal, without a chance of ultimate escape." Doubtless, the sufferings endured by the poor horses are very disgusting to witness ; but it is merely because *we see* their agonies, that we feel so acutely for them. Before we condemn the Spaniards, therefore, let us look again at the amusements of our own country, and *consider* how many birds every sportsman dooms to linger in the excruciating torments of a broken leg or wing, or some painful bodily wound, for each one that he kills !— "But recollect," rejoins my Interlocutor, "recollect the difference between a bird and such a *noble animal* as a horse!"—Certes, I reply, a horse is a nobler looking beast than a pheasant or a wild duck ; but just observe the wretchedness of our own decayed equine nobility, standing in Trafalgar Square and other rendezvous of cabs and hackney coaches !—Would it not be comparative charity to end their sufferings by half an hour's exposure in the Arena ?

I must next throw my gauntlet into the arena in behalf of the Spanish Ladies, who I maintain are vilely aspersed by those who have represented them as taking pleasure in the tortures inflicted on the unfortunate horses, and as ex-

pressing delight at the jeopardy in which the lives of the bull's human persecutors are sometimes placed.

On such occasions, I have on the contrary remarked, that they always retired to the back part of their box, or, if they could not do that, turned their heads away in disgust or alarm.

It may be said, that they have no business at such exhibitions. Very true—but surely some allowance is due, considering their want of such breakneck sights as horse-races and steeple-chases? And,—apart the cruelty to the animals,—I see no greater harm in the Spanish Lady's attendance at a Bull-fight, than our fair country-woman's witnessing such national sports.—The *Toreadores** are certainly not exposed to greater risks than the jockeys and gentlemen whom taste or avocation leads daily to encounter the dangers of the field, for the entertainment of the public!

At the numerous bull-fights I have witnessed—for I must plead guilty to having become an *aficionado*†—I saw but four men hurt, and who can say as much, that has hunted regularly throughout the season with a pack of fox-hounds? or, that has walked the streets of London for a week, since cabs and omnibuses have been introduced?

* Bull-fighters.

An Amateur.

Certainly, it is not unusual to hear female voices cry, “*Bravo toro!*” when some fierce bull has, at his first sweep round the circle, borne down all the horsemen opposed to him; and then, maddened with pain, and flushed with victory, but unable to attain his human tormentors, (who, in spite of the ponderous weight of cuirasse, boot leather, and padding that encumbers them, always manage to hobble off to a place of refuge) rushes upon the poor blind-fold, abandoned horses; which, with just sufficient strength to get upon their legs, stand trembling in the centre of the Arena, quite conscious of their danger, but not knowing which way to avoid it, and thus, one by one, fall victims to the rage of their infuriated enemy.—On such occasions, I repeat, I have heard such encouraging cries proceed from female lips; but he who asserts that they have been uttered by a Spanish *Lady* can be classed only with *Monsieur Pillet*, (I think that was the *quinze jours à Londres* gentleman’s name) who stated that all English Ladies *boxed* and drank brandy.

The most amusing part of the sport afforded by the Bulls is the driving them into the town. This is done at night, and the following is the method adopted. The animals, having been conducted from their native pastures to the vale of Ronda, are left to graze upon the sides

of the mountains, until the night preceding the first days *corrida*; when a number of persons—of whom a large proportion are amateurs—proceed from the city, armed with long lances, to drive them into their destined slaughterhouse. The weapons, however, are more for show than use; since the savage animals are decoyed, rather than goaded, into the snare prepared for them. To effect this, some tame animals are intermixed with the new comers on their first arrival; and these, trained by human devices in all the ways of deceit, lead them off to slake their thirst at the purest rill, and point out to them the tenderest pasture wherewith to satisfy their hunger. The unsuspecting strangers, trusting to the *pundonor* of their new friends, abandon themselves to a Cupuan enjoyment of the delights of this fertile region, and perceive not the host of human foes that, under shelter of the night, are stealthily encircling them. The investment completed, a horseman rides forward to attract the attention of their treacherous brethren, who trot off after him, followed by the whole herd. The rest of the horsemen now close upon their rear, urging the bulls forward with loud shouts and blazing torches; and, following close upon the heels of their leader, the wonder-struck animals enter the town at a brisk pace and in compact order,

The cross streets having been strongly barricaded, the *avant courier* of the *Calbalgada* proceeds straight to the court-yard attached to the amphitheatre, the entrance to which alone has been left open, and forthwith ensconces himself in a stable. The savage brutes, bewildered by the strangeness of the scene, the blaze of lights and din of voices, make no attempts either at escape or resistance, but, blindly following his track, enter the court-yard, the gate of which is immediately closed upon them.

A number of doors are now thrown open, which communicate with a large apartment boarded off into narrow stalls. Into these but one bull at a time can enter, and each of the decoy animals, selecting a separate entrance, is quickly followed by two or three of the strangers. The tame animal is permitted to pass through the narrow passage and escape at the other end; but the unhappy victims of his toils, in attempting to follow his footsteps, find their progress impeded by stout bars let down from above, and are thus finally and securely installed.

Under this unpleasant restraint they continue until their services are required in the arena; and during this brief period they are open to the inspection of the curious, who can examine them at their ease from the apartment above,

the planking of the floor being left open for the express purpose.

When the hour of the bull is come, the front bar of his prison is withdrawn, a goad from above urges him forward, and, rushing from his dark cell into the broad daylight, the astonished animal finds himself at once in the *Arena* and within a few paces of a *Picador*'s lance, couched ready to receive his attack.

Some rush upon their enemy without a moment's hesitation ; and I have not unfrequently seen a valiant bull overthrow the four *picadores* placed at intervals round the circus, in less than that number of minutes. But, in general, the animal pauses ere making his first onset—looks round with amazement at the assembled multitude—paws up the dusty surface of the arena—appears bewildered at the novelty of the sight and by the din of voices,—and is undecided where to make the first attack. At length, his eye rests on the nearest picador, and it is seldom withdrawn until he has made his charge. He rushes on his enemy with his head erect, lowering it only when arrived within a few paces. The picador gives point to receive him on the fleshy part of the neck above the right shoulder ; and, if his horse be steady, he generally succeeds in turning the bull off. But should the bull, regardless of his wound, return

immediately to the attack, the man has not time to resume his defensive position, and his only safety is in ignominious flight. If his steed be quick in answering the spur, he is soon removed from danger, but, if otherwise, nine times in ten both horse and rider are laid prostrate.

Whilst in confinement, the bulls are decorated with the colours of their respective breeders (a bunch of ribbon, attached to a dart, which is forced into the animal's shoulder); and such as appear tame, and hold out small promise of sport, are often "ingeniously tormented" previously to being turned into the arena. I have heard also that it is not unusual, when the circus is small, and the *Toreadores* are not very expert, to weaken the animal's powers by letting a weight fall upon his back, so as to injure the spine; but this refinement of cruelty is certainly not practised at Ronda.

It doubtless requires the possession of some courage to be a bull-fighter; though at the same time it is to be recollected, that the people who devote themselves to the profession have been brought up, from their earliest youth, amongst the horns of these animals, and have thus acquired a knowledge of all their peculiarities; they are consequently aware, that the bull's furious onset requires but a little activity to be readily avoided, and they have by long

habit become quick-sighted to take advantage of his blind rage, for striking their blow. But, above all, their confidence is increased by knowing with what ease the attention of the bull is drawn off; and no Picador or Matador ever ventures into the arena unattended by one *Chulo*,* at least; who, provided with a gaudy coloured flag or cloak, stands near at hand to occupy the bull's attention, should his opponent have met with any accident.

I once witnessed a laughable instance—as it turned out—of the ease with which a bull's attention may be diverted. An *Aguador*, or water-seller, had taken post in the narrow passage which serves as a retreat for the bull-fighters when hard pressed, between the front row of seats and the Arena, and, unconscious of danger, was vending his iced liquid to the thirsty spectators—pouring it with singular dexterity from a huge jar made fast to his back into their outstretched goblets—when a bull, following close upon the heels of a *Chulo*, leapt the five-foot barrier, and came with his fore legs amongst the front row spectators, but, unable to make good his footing, fell back into the narrow passage. The *Chulo*, by

* Literally, *Jester*.—The term has probably been applied to the bull-fighter's *assistant*, from the part he acts in drawing the animal's attention.

vaulting back into the Arena, readily escaped from the enraged animal, which, not having space to turn round, face and re-leap the barrier, found himself a prisoner within the narrow passage. Very different, however, was the situation of the venturesome *Aguador*, who, labouring under his weighty liquid incubus, could not possibly have clambered over the fence, even had time permitted of his making the attempt. But, so far from that being the case, the bull having instantly recovered his legs, was coming trotting and bellowing towards him, with the most felonious intentions. The spectators shouted with all their might to the luckless water-seller, *to save himself*; alas! how was he to do so?—a single glance over his right shoulder convinced him of the vainness of the admonition! Instinct prompted him to run; but escape appeared impossible; for the horns of the rabid animal were within a few feet of him, and every barrier was closed!

In this awful predicament, fright made him take the only step that could possibly have saved him—namely, a *false one*. He stumbled, groaned, and fell flat upon his face. The bull, without slackening his speed, stooped down to give him his *quietus*; when a peasant—one of the spectators—having tied his pocket-hand-

kerchief to the end of his *porra*,* dangled it before the animal's eyes just as he reached the fallen *Aguador*. The enraged bull, making a toss at the new object thus placed before him, bounded over the prostrate water-carrier, without doing any other injury than breaking his jar with his hind feet, and proceeded on to complete the tour of the circus.

The fright of the fortunate vender of water was excessive, and *now* most ludicrous. The liquid poured in torrents over his shoulders and down his neck, leading him to believe that he had been most desperately gored, and that it was his life's blood which was — not oozing out of, but—absolutely deluging him. He screamed most lustily that he was a dead man ; and the spectators, highly amused at the scene, cried out in return, “Get up—get up, or you'll be drowned!” But, until some of the *Chulos* came to his aid, and put him on his legs, he could not be persuaded that he had escaped without even a scratch.

He lost no time, however, in putting the power of his limbs to the proof, running off as fast as they could carry him, to escape from the jeers of the crowd, who, amidst roars of laughter, shouted after him, “What a gash !”

* A long club stick, with which the shepherds and others keep their flocks in order, and bring to the Bull-fights to signify their impatience and displeasure, by striking it against the woodwork.

—“ I can see right through his body.”—“ The Bull is swimming after you !”—“ *Toro! Toro!*” &c.

We will now leave the Amphitheatre, and proceed to visit one of the most interesting sights of the ancient city—namely, an extraordinary staircase, or *Mina* as it is called by the natives, which, sunk close to the edge of the chasm dividing the two towns, communicates with the rocky bed of the river.

It is said to have been a work of Abou Melic, the first king of Ronda, and was clearly undertaken to ensure a supply of water to the city in the event of a siege ;— the want of this indispensable article being, in those early days, the only dread the inattackable fortress had to guard against.

The entrance to the *Mina* is in the garden attached to a gentleman’s house at a little distance from, and to the east of, the principal bridge.

The descent, according to our Cicerone’s information, was formerly effected by 365 steps, cut in the live rock ; but, at the present day, it would defy the powers of numbers to reckon them, the greater part of the staircase being in so ruinous a condition as to be barely practicable. I should suppose, however, the depth of the *Mina*, from its mouth to the bed of the river, is about 250 feet. It pierces the solid rock, in

short and very irregular zig-zags, for about two thirds the distance down, when, entering a natural rent in the cliff, the remaining portion is built up from the bottom of the chasm with large blocks of stone; advantage having been taken of a lateral projection, to cover this artificial facing from an enemy's projectiles.

At various levels, passages lead off from the staircase into spacious and curiously arched apartments, to which light is admitted by narrow casements opening into the chasm or tajo. This subterranean edifice is supposed to have been a palace of the Moorish kings.

On the side walls of the narrow, crooked staircase, are numerous rudely engraved crosses, which our conductor assured us were wrought by the hands of the Christian captives who, during the last siege of the place, were employed in bringing up water for the use of the garrison, and whose oft-repeated signs of faith, thus lightly marked by their passing hands, had miraculously left these deep impressions on the hard stone. "Nor"—added he—"did such proofs of their devotion go unrewarded even in this world, for their liberation quickly followed; the until then unconquered city having been wrested from the Mohammedans after only a few weeks' siege."—The chains of these good Christians were sent to Toledo, in one of the churches of which city they may yet be seen.

Various other remarkable legends are related of this wonderful place; which, however, I will pass over, to say a few words of other objects worthy of observation in the vicinity of the city.

Of these, the most interesting to the Antiquary are the ruins of the Roman city of Acinippo,* which lie scattered on the side of a mountain on the left of the road to Seville by way of Olbera, and distant about ten miles N.W. from Ronda. Some of the Spanish Geographers persist in calling it *Ronda la vieja*, (old Ronda,) but certainly on no good grounds, since no place bearing the comparatively modern name of Ronda could well be of older date than the present city itself.

In the time of Carter, the venerable ruins of Acinippo could boast of containing an Amphitheatre and the foundations of several spacious temples, all in tolerable preservation; but these are now barely perceptible; and the statues, pavements, in fact, every thing considered worth removing, has long since been carried to Ronda.

Numerous Roman coins are daily turned up

* Acenipo, according to Ptolemy. The ruined city was discovered A.D. 1650, and the coins, inscriptions, and statues, that have been found there, leave no doubt of its being the Acenippo mentioned by Pliny as one of the cities of *Celtica*, (Lib. iii.) the situation of which country had long been matter of dispute; some supposing it to have been on the banks of the Guadiana.

by the plough, as it passes over the streets of the ancient city, and Cameos, intaglios, and other more valuable relics, may be procured occasionally from the peasants dwelling in the neighbourhood.

But, though scarcely one stone of Acinippo now rests upon another, still the view from the site is of itself a sufficient reward for the trouble of scrambling to the summit of the mountain ; whence, on a clear day, it is said that even Cadiz may be seen.

Deep in the valley, on the opposite or eastern side, flows the principal source of the Guadalete, (water of *Lethe*) which the Spaniards maintain is the *real* river of *Oblivion* of the ancients. Where the fertilizing stream flows amongst the vineyards of Xeres, it probably has often proved so without any fable.

On the bank of this rivulet stands the little castellated town of Setenil ; famous in Moorish history, as having defied all the efforts of the Christians to subdue it, until the ponderous lombards of Ferdinand and Isabella were brought to bear with unerring aim upon its rock-based battlements. A.D. 1484.

Within another morning's ride from Ronda is a very remarkable cavern, in the side of a lofty mountain, about five miles to the S.W. of the city, and known by the name of the *Cueva*

del Gato (Cat's cave). The entrance to it is some way up the face of a scarped wall of rock, that falls along the right bank of the Guadiaro, and can be gained only by those whose heads and feet are proof against the dizzy and slippery perils to be encountered; the ascent being over a pile of rough granite blocks, moistened by the spray of a foaming torrent that gushes out of the narrow cavity. These difficulties surmounted, the cavern itself is tolerably practicable, and the stream flows more tranquilly, though still here and there obstructed by blocks of stone. After penetrating some way into the interior, an opening of considerable width presents itself, where a ruined building of very ancient date is observable. It is said to owe its foundation to the Romans, and to have been a temple dedicated to the infernal deities. Rumour alleges that in later times it has served as a refuge for banditti. To proceed further, it is necessary to be well supplied with torches: with their aid I was informed the cavern is practicable for a great distance.

The stream to which this cavern gives a passage, takes its rise in a wooded basin, situated on the opposite side the mountain ridge, from whence the waters of all the other valleys are led off in a northerly direction to the Guadalete. This eccentric little rivulet directs its course, however, to the south, reaches the foot of a high-

peaked mount that overlooks the village of Montejaque, and there, its course being obstructed by the solid rock, betakes itself once more to the earth, filtering its way for upwards of a mile through the mountain, and finally discharging itself into the Guadiaro* by the mouth of the *Cueva del gato*.

The Cavern is said to have received its name from the wonderful feat of a cat, which, put into the fissure by which the stream disappears from the surface of the ground, reached the other entrance with one of its lives yet unexhausted.

Numerous other delightful excursions may be made from Ronda, up the ravines in the surrounding mountains ; and, should the sports of the field possess attractions, the country is noted for its abundance of game of all kinds ; from quails and red-legged partridges, to wild boars, deer, and wolves.

In following this pursuit, chance one morning directed my footsteps along the edge of the precipice, that (as I have already mentioned,) bounds the New town to the west, and which, describing a wide circle, and gradually losing something of its height, once more closes upon the Guadiaro, about a mile below the city.

* Carter, who it is clear never visited the spot, fancied it was the Guadiaro itself that issued from the *Cueva del Gato*.

The space that nature has thus singularly walled in, and sunk beneath the rest of the vale of Ronda, is richly clad with gardens and vineyards ; and the little stream, having disengaged itself from the dark chasm that divides the two towns, here once more slackens its pace, to luxuriate under refreshing groves of orange, citron, and pomegranate trees. Arrived, however, at the southern extremity of this basin, the rocky ledge on which I found myself standing again presents an obstacle to the tranquil flow of the crystal stream, and it hurries fretfully through a narrow defile, of the same wild character as that in which it received its birth ; the banks being thickly clothed with the endless varieties of the cistus, and shadowed by the dense and sombre foliage of the ilex and wild olive.

Beyond this, a glen of somewhat more easy access presents itself, and the river is spanned by a light but firmly-knit arch, that bears the romantic name of the *Puente del Duende*, or, the Bridge of the Fairy. So sequestered is this spot—for it is some distance from any public road—that the little bridge, though well known to the country people, is seldom visited by strangers ; and indeed its leafy canopy is so impervious, that, until arrived at the very brink of the precipice overlooking the dell, it is not

possible either to discover the bridge or to trace the further progress of the river itself, which, by its tortuous course, seems loth to leave the lovely valley that has grown rich under its fostering care.

The mountains beyond appear equally unwilling that the beauteous basin should lose its benefactor ; presenting themselves in such confused and successive masses, and in such intricate forms, as seem to preclude the possibility of the little stream ever finding its way through them to the Mediterranean.

Conspicuous above all the other points of this serrated range, is the *Pico de San Cristoval*, — said in the country to be the first land made by Columbus on his return from the discovery of the New World. Certain it is, that this peak,—called also *La Cabeza del Moro* (Moor's head) — can be seen at an immense distance. I myself, from the blue Atlantic, have traced its faint outline reaching far above the horizon, when the low land about Cadiz, though comparatively near, could not even be discerned.

In following the course of the stream, however, I have been carried far below the Fairy's Bridge, to which it is time I should retrace my steps. The narrow little structure serves, at this day, merely as a point of passage to a mill, situated on the left bank of the rivulet ; from

whence long trains of pig-skin laded mules convey almost as constant, if not so copious a stream, of oil and wine, *over* the bridge, as that of water which flows beneath it. The hills that rise at the back of the mill — and which in our more level country would be called mountains — are clad to their very summits with vineyards and olive groves — the sources of this gladdening and fattening stream. There was, nevertheless, an air of solitude, and even of mystery, about the spot, that greatly excited my curiosity. The reckless muleteers devoutly crossed themselves ere they ventured to pass over the little bridge ; some even prostrated themselves before a crucifix rudely carved in wood that stood overhanging it. The more timid goatherds drove their flocks far away from the holy spot ; and those whom I questioned concerning it gave me to understand, that the less they said and I inquired on the subject, the better for all parties.

The owner of the mill, without being quite so reserved, was equally mysterious ; saying that, though in this sceptical age many persons were disposed to regard the wonderful things related of the place as mere *cuentas de viejas* — i. e. old women's tales — yet that he could vouch for their truth, and, whilst it would be unbecoming in him (as Herodotus said before him) to disclose *all* he knew, this much he *could* say, —

that it would be dangerous for most people to dwell as near the enchanted spot as he did. "But," added he, throwing open his shirt and exposing what I learnt was a piece of a black dog's skin, that he wore suspended from a rosary at his breast, "this is a sovereign charm against all manner of witchcraft."

I afterwards discovered that the olive-grinding rogue was a notorious smuggler, and kept his contraband goods concealed in what are supposed to be haunted caverns, under his habitation, secure from the search of superstitious *Aduaneros*.*

My curiosity still further excited by the difficulty experienced in gratifying it, I applied for information touching the Fairy's Bridge to my friend Don — — —, who referred me to *El Padre Canonigo, Don Apodo Fulano*, adding laughingly, "You will be amused at the worthy father's serious manner of relating the story; but I can assure you,—divesting it of the marvellous,—it is not *todo cisco y carbon, como tesoro de duende*."†

To the *Padre* I forthwith bent my steps; and the following chapter contains his account of the *Puente del Duende*, which I give as nearly as possible in his own words.

* Custom-house officers.

† All ashes and coal, like a fairy's treasure.

CHAPTER VII.

LEGEND OF THE FAIRY'S BRIDGE.

“My companions said to me, ‘Do you visit her monument?’ but I answered, ‘Where but in my heart should she have a tomb?’”

ARABIC ELEGY.

You must know, Don Carlos, commenced the worthy Padre, “*con voz reposada y clara*”*— You must know, that the bridge you have just visited has usurped the name it bears, which was given to a much more extraordinary structure—if such it may be called—that formerly occupied its place; or, I should rather say, that was situated near the present edifice; for the supernatural bridge of which I am about to speak was thrown across the ravine somewhat lower down the stream; where, as you may have observed, the cliff on the left bank falls quite perpendicularly along the river, and is at this day entirely overgrown with ivy.

This bridge was formed of a single tree; a

* With a clear and tranquil voice.—*Don Quijote*.

huge *acebuche** — a tree often employed as an agent in working miracles — which, having grown for ages on the brink of the precipice, was one night marvellously felled to the earth. That it had been prostrated by supernatural means was evident; for the trunk bore no marks of the axe; and though still adhering to the stump by the bark and some slight fibres, yet it had been most curiously blackened and charred; whilst a wild vine, which (having entwined itself gracefully round its wide-spreading branches) had accompanied it in his fall, remained unscorched, and seemed to have been purposely left unhurt, to serve as a hand-rope to steady the footsteps of the venturesome passenger over the tremulous bridge.

The further extremity of the tree rested on a ledge that projected lightly from the opposite cliff; above which, a fissure in the rock appeared to lead into a dark cavern. But so curiously was the rustic bridge balanced, that as sure as any mortal attempted to cross by it to the opposite side of the river, so sure was he to be precipitated into the abyss below.

It is supposed that this chink in the cliff had served to admit light and air to some spacious caverns which, in remote times, had been formed in the rocks, and from which a rude staircase had communicated with a *quinta*, or country

* Wild olive.

house, situated in the midst of the vineyards and olive grounds that clothe the hill side. But of these, Don Carlos, no vestige now remains; indeed all traces of them were lost soon after the occurrence of the events I am about to relate.

The last possessor of this villa was a wealthy Moor — Abenhabuz by name — of the tribe of the Ganzules, and one of the most distinguished *Alfaquies* of the proud city of Ronda. To the treachery of this Moor the capture of the Moslem stronghold by the Catholic kings* was mainly attributed; for the bravery of its *Alcaide*, the strength of its garrison, and the triple circuit of walls by which in those days its assailable points were defended, rendered it too formidable a post even for such indomitable spirits as Ferdinand and Isabella to think of attacking. But Hamet Zeli, surnamed *El Zegri*, the fierce governor of Ronda, dreamed not of treason, and least of all did he suppose that Abenhabuz, his bosom friend, could betray him. But what will not envy stoop to do? He was persuaded by his deceitful confidant that the Spaniards were laying close siege to Malaga, and that a most favourable opportunity thereby was presented for making a foray in their country. Sallying forth, therefore, with his brave *Gomeles* — the principal strength of the

* *Los Reyes Catolicos* — the title by which Ferdinand and Isabella are invariably distinguished.

garrison—El Zegri crossed the mountains to the westward of the city, and fell upon the unprotected country round Arcos and Xeres de la Frontera.

Ferdinand and Isabella were quickly informed of his departure from Ronda, and, breaking up their camp before Malaga without loss of time, pressed forward through the rugged and now unguarded defiles of El Burgo, to seize upon their prey.

El Zegri, loaded with plunder, and breathing further vengeance, bent his steps also towards his sequestered fortress; little, however, anticipating the blow that awaited him. It was only at his bivouac in the dark cork forest under the lofty *Sierra del Pinar* that the thunder of the Castilian artillery burst upon his astounded ear.—He mounted his courser in all haste, and, dashing forward with mad speed, stopped not until he had gained the pass of *Montejaque*. You see it there, Don Carlos, (said the Padre, pointing to a deep gap in the summit of the serrated ridge that bounds the basin of Ronda to the west) it is still known in the country as *El Puerto del Pasmo del Moro*.*—What a sight there met his eager, searching eye! The proud city entrusted to his care, hemmed in on all sides by Christian lances!—the sumptuous mosques and stately palaces of his ancestors, crumbling

* The Pass of the horror-struck Moor.

to dust, under the all-destroying projectiles of the implacable enemies of his creed!—A cry of rage burst from him; but his prudence even in that trying moment did not forsake him. Checking his advancing troops, so as to keep them out of sight of the beleaguered army, he sent forward a trusty messenger, who, gaining admission to the Fortress, cheered its feeble garrison with the news of his being at hand, and of his intention to force his way into the city during the night. But Abenhabuz took care to have this information conveyed to the besiegers; and El Zegris' bold attempt was consequently foiled.

The inhabitants, seeing all hope of relief now cut off, their store of provisions nearly exhausted, and large gaps formed in the walls of their until-now unconquered city, deemed it prudent to negotiate for a capitulation; and the sagacious Ferdinand, aware that El Zegri was still in the field—that the place could yet hold out some weeks—that his own supplies might be cut off,—and that to carry the city by storm would be attended with immense loss of life,—willingly granted most favourable terms; the garrison and inhabitants were permitted to depart with all their effects; such of them as chose to remain in Spain having even lands assigned to them, and being permitted the free exercise of their religion.

But whilst the wily Ferdinand hesitated not to grant these liberal terms, yet, as in duty bound, he forthwith transmitted to Rome a formal declaration of his resolve to extirpate the abominable heresy of Mohammed from his dominions, whenever a fitting opportunity should occur; thus piously reserving to himself the right of infringing the terms of capitulation, wherever his doing so should seem most conducive to the interests of our holy religion.

The traitor Abenhabuz, besides the indulgences granted by the terms of the surrender, was, as the price of his treason, permitted to reside within the city, and to retain possession of his estates. But some years after, (when, by the capture of Granada, the Catholic Monarchs were relieved from all apprehension of evil consequences ensuing from carrying their long meditated plans into effect) he, as well as the other Moslems who had chosen to remain in Spain, was offered the alternative of Christianity or expatriation. He balanced not in the choice; but forthwith repairing to the altar of Our Lady of griefs, declared himself a convert to the true faith.

In consequence of this act—with the piety and generosity which have at all times distinguished the Spanish nation above all others—the Moor was graciously allowed to keep possession of the lovely *quinta* and its surrounding

vineyards ; the rest of his vast estates being made over—for the good of his soul—as an expiatory offering to the chivalric brotherhood of Santiago.

Abenhabuz retired to his country retreat, accompanied only by his daughter, the beauteous Hinzára ; for his sons—true scions of an Arabic stock — chose rather to seek a home on the parched shores of Africa, than abandon the accursed dogmas of their Prophet.

Hinzára was the youngest of the Moor's children, and the sole issue of a Christian maiden who had been captured in a foray some time previous to the fall of Ronda, and who — meditating his future treason—Abenhabuz had considered it conducive to his interest to marry.

At the period of his expulsion from the city, his wife had been dead some time, and his daughter had just reached the age when a maiden's footsteps most require the guidance of a mother's care. But Hinzára was a being of no common order. The rosebud bursting through the petals of its mossy calyx, spreading its delicious fragrance to the summer breeze, exceeds not more in loveliness every other flower of the field, than the beauty of Hinzára surpassed that of all the maidens of the neighbourhood. To you, Don Carlos, whose eyes are daily feasted on the charms of our comely Andalusians, it will suffice to say, that in the daughter

of Abenhabuz were combined the regular features and soft expression of the dark-eyed *Mallagueña*; the blooming cheek and polished brow of the fair *Serrana** of Casarabonela; and the form and carriage of the graceful *Gaditana*!† Her person, in fact, was a bouquet, of the choicest flowers culled from this our Hesperian garden; whilst her mind might be likened to a book, in which, as in the pages of our incomparable Cervantes, were to be found united the most brilliant wit, the soundest discretion, the purest sentiment, and the nicest judgment.

Courted by all the principal chieftains of the day—Spaniards as well as Moriscoes—Hinzára appeared alike regardless of their adulation, and unmoved by their importunity. But the Moorish maiden was not insensible, and — unknown to all besides—had pledged her hand to a noble Biscayan youth, long the possessor of her guileless heart.

The ancestors of Don Ramiro—for such was her lover's appellation—though rich in deeds of renown, had left him little else than an untarnished sword, to support the glorious names of Segastibelza y Bigorre which he inherited from them. And besides his poverty, Hinzára had other reasons (which will be stated as I proceed with my tale) to fear that her father's consent to their union would not be easily obtained.

* Mountaineer.

† Native of Cadiz.

Abenhabuz was, to all appearance, fully sensible of the generosity that had been so manifestly shown to him; and though now the possessor of but the few vineyards and olive grounds that encircled his *quinta*, he was nevertheless generally considered a wealthy man:—a reputation for which he was as much indebted to his imagined knowledge of Alchymy, as for the hords he was supposed to have collected during a long life of rapine and plunder.

This character for wealth, whilst it excited the cupidity of many, secured to him the protection of the governor of Ronda, Don Guiterre Mondejar; who, captivated by the charms of the beauteous Hinzára, hoped, together with her hand, to obtain, what he coveted yet more, the imaginary treasures of the Alchymist.

The crafty Moor readily promised him the immediate possession of the one, and the inheritance of the other; but he had no intention of fulfilling his engagements. The protection of a powerful friend was needful for a time, to screen his proceedings from a too-vigilant observation; particularly, since the establishment of the Holy Inquisition by Ferdinand and Isabella of blessed memory (here the worthy Father crossed himself most devoutly) was a thorn in the side of these backsliding Christians that obliged them to be extremely circumspect; but the implacable Abenhabuz cherished hopes of wreaking vengeance on those by whom he chose

to conceive he had been wronged ; and the Spanish governor was one of his marked victims.

In the prosecution of his horrible designs, the Moor was prepared to immolate even his own daughter to satisfy his revenge ; though this was an extremity to which he hoped not to be driven. It may, however, be readily imagined that his stock of parental affection was not very great, and that he concerned himself but little in his daughter's affairs. He enjoined her to be strict in the outward observance of her religious duties, the better to conceal his own delinquency ; but of her actual conversion to Christianity, and her acquaintance with Don Ramiro, he was altogether ignorant.

For a considerable time, Abenhabuz succeeded, under various pretences, in deferring the fulfilment of his contract with Don Guiterre ; but, at length, finding his projects of vengeance not yet ripe for execution, and that the amorous Spaniard was becoming every day more urgent for the possession of Hinzára, he determined to overcome the few weak qualms of conscience that had hitherto withheld him from sacrificing his daughter, and intimated to her that she was shortly to become the wife of the abhorred Guiterre. To his surprise, however—for it was for the first time in her life—Hinzára refused obedience to his will. Commands and entreaties were alike unavailing :—to the first she opposed a calm but resolute refusal ; to the latter a flood of

tears. But when the infuriated father employed threats, and assailed her with invectives,—“Hold!” exclaimed the daughter of the cross. “Though, in casting off the execrable heresy of Mohammed, I cast not off my Moslem father, yet in embracing this,” and she drew from her bosom a small gold crucifix, “I obtained a Protector against all outrage; and should he at the cost of my plighted word,—my word, for the observance of which I have pledged my belief in a crucified redeemer—persist in exacting obedience to his will; amongst the Holy Sisterhood of Santa Ursula shall I seek, and readily find, a refuge from his tyranny.”

The Infidel was thunderstruck — his rage unbounded. Scarcely admitting that a woman had a soul to be saved, he had thought it mattered little whether his daughter was a Mohammedan or a Christian; conceiving that, in either case, her duty to him prescribed passive obedience. But he had always imagined that Hinzára’s abjuration of Islamism, like his own, was a mere mockery, and that he should find in her a willing instrument to work his purpose of taking vengeance on his Christian rulers. Awakened now to a sense of his error,—and as he considered of his danger—he feared that she might, on the contrary, prove an insuperable bar to the execution of his plans; and he determined to lose no time in removing her.

Dissimulation was, however, necessary. Smothering, therefore, his anger, he affected to be moved by her tears. He alluded no more to the marriage contract entered into with Don Guiterre; and, treating her with more than wonted kindness, lulled her into forgetfulness of his former harshness, whilst he matured the most hellish plot that ever was conceived by man, to render her subservient to his designs.

Informing the governor of Hinzára's determined opposition to their wishes, he imparted to him the diabolical scheme he contemplated to force her into compliance; and in the vile Spaniard he unfortunately found a too willing abettor of his infamous project.

The cavern under the Moor's habitation contained numerous chambers opening into each other, the innermost of which was known only to Abenhabuz himself; the entrance being concealed by tapestry, and closed by means of secret springs. On the plea of having some repairs executed to the quinta, Hinzára and her father retired to the subterranean apartments; Abenhabuz occupying that which communicated with the staircase, Hinzára the one from which the secret chamber opened; the intermediate chamber serving as their common refectory.

One afternoon, as the sun was closing his diurnal course, an officer of the Holy Inquisition, accompanied by numerous Aquagils and

masked attendants, appeared suddenly before the abode of the renegade Moor. The terrified domestics fell on their knees, repeating their *Pater nosters*, too much alarmed to give notice of the approach of the visitors ; and the officer, followed by his satellites, proceeded straight to the entrance of the Souterrain, and demanded instant admission.

“ Who is he,” inquired Abenhabuz from within, “ that thus unannounced requires entry ? If his business be of worldly affairs, let him choose some more fitting time, nor disturb a good Christian at his evening devotions ; but, if aught else, enter — the latch is now raised.” The party immediately rushed forward, but the superior stopped short at the scene before him — Abenhabuz, clothed in sackcloth, stretched prostrate on the bare floor before an image of the blessed Virgin ! Beside him lay a scourge, with which he had evidently been inflicting self-punishment !

“ What want ye of me ?” demanded the Moor, without rising from the rocky floor.— “ With *you* we have *now* no further business, good Abenhabuz,” replied the officer. “ We must however see your daughter — for such is our duty — though doubtless she follows the example of her pious father.” — “ Hinzára,” said the Moor, “ is within that second chamber,” pointing to the door — then raising his voice,

he called out in Spanish—"Hinzára, my child, open, that these worthy Señores may bear witness to the piety of Abenhabuz' daughter;" but Hinzára answered not.

"What is this?" exclaimed the Moor—"the heat of the summer sun has surely overcome her.—Hinzára, my beloved, open quickly"—but still Hinzára replied not.

"Force open the door, then," said the officer, "but quietly—disturb not her sleep, if such be the cause of her silence. Excuse this apparent rudeness, worthy *Alfaqui*; our orders are imperative."

Admittance was quickly gained, and disclosed to the spectators the lovely form of Hinzára, extended on a divan, her eyes closed in profound sleep. Her right arm, passed across her gently heaving bosom, hung over the side of the couch, and on the floor beneath it lay a book, which to all appearance had fallen from it.—That book was the *Koran*!

The exclamations of the astonished spectators, but, above all, the wailings of old Abenhabuz, soon brought the sleeper to her senses. But not to detain you, Don Carlos, with superfluous details: suffice it to say, that further search was made; the secret doorway was discovered, and exposed to view a small apartment furnished with the *Mehrab*,* de-

* The niche which marks the direction of Mecca.

noting it to be a Mohammedan place of worship.

No one of the assembled group was, or rather appeared to be, so much shocked as Abenhabuz.—“Father! Father!” exclaimed the frantic Hinzára in tones of the most piercing anguish:—but, overcome by the intensity of her emotion, she could utter no more, and fell senseless to the ground.

Happy had it been for the wretched Hinzára had this insensibility to mundane ills been the perpetual sleep of death! But inscrutable, my friend, are the ways of Providence! The innocent victim of this fiendish plot woke only to the torments of the Inquisition!—Oh that an institution, ordained to effect so much good, should in this instance have been the means of inflicting such unmerited anguish! But what human works are all perfect?

I must not attempt, Don Carlos, to raise the veil that covered the events which followed. The disappearance of Hinzára, whose virtues yet more than her beauty caused her to be universally beloved, excited much solicitude. But time swept on; and at length all, save *one*, seemed to have forgotten the existence of the ill-fated maiden. That *one*, however, persisted in his endeavours to trace her out; and, dangerous as was the attempt, to penetrate even the secrets of the Holy Inquisition. But all his efforts were unavailing.

Still, however, Ramiro clung to the idea that she had not been removed from Ronda; and despising the alluring prospects of wealth and distinction, at that time held out by the discovery of a new world, he remained rooted to the spot. At length his sad presentiment was but too truly realized. A mysteriously-worded billet, left by an unknown hand, warned him of approaching calamity; shortly after, public notice was given that an execution of heretics was about to take place; and on the appointed day, headmost of the wretched criminals, and clothed in a dress of surge, representing flames and demons,—indicative of her impending fate,—was the hapless daughter of Abenhabuz.

The frantic Ramiro soon distinguished her from the rest. The pile that was to immolate his lovely, innocent Hinzára was already lighted—the criminals destined for execution were about to be given over to the secular power—when, rushing to the feet of the Grand Inquisitor, the proud descendant of the bluest blood in Spain, on his bent knees, supplicated for mercy. With the eloquence of despair, he pleaded her youth, her virtues, her piety;—but, alas! he pleaded in vain!—“Let me at least,” said he at length, “make one effort to induce her to confess?—my known loyalty—my birth—my station—entitle me to this boon.”

The Inquisitor was moved;—Ramiro's en-

treaties were seconded by a faint murmur that ran through the crowd ; and his request was granted, despite the frowns of Don Guiterre, into whose hands, as governor of the city, the condemned were about to pass.

A passage was quickly opened for Ramiro through the dense multitude, and, amidst loud *vivas*, he flew to his Hinzára. The maiden's countenance brightened at the approach of her long separated lover. Starting from the posture of prayer, in which she was devoutly attending to the exhortations of one of the holy brotherhood appointed to the sad office of attending her in her last moments—yet not without first raising her eyes in gratitude to the great disposer of all things—“Thanks, beloved Ramiro,” said she, “for this last, convincing proof of affection ! I almost fear, however, to ask—didst thou receive my message?”—“I did,” replied her lover ; “but let me implore thee, adored Hinzára, to change thy purpose—alas ! beloved of my soul, hope not that thy silence will aught avail thy father. Be assured his fate is sealed—nay—I know not but that he may already have been sacrificed ; for, during many weeks past, I have in vain sought to gain tidings of him.—Declare then all thou knowest, and at least save thyself, and me—who cannot survive thy loss—from the fate that hangs over us.”——“No, Ramiro,” replied the maiden,

in slow but steady accents, “my resolve is fixed. Since there is yet a *chance* of saving my father, *we* must part—let us hope to meet again hereafter.—I trust thou hast been able to comply with my desire?” — He motioned assent. — “ Then Heaven bless thee, dearest Ramiro! as thou lovest me, obey my last injunctions—return not evil for evil — there is another and a better world—risk not our chance of possessing in it the happiness denied to us here.”

One moment of human weakness succeeded—it was but one — Hinzára’s head fell upon her lover’s breast—her bloodless lips met his for the first—the last time. Recovering herself quickly, “ Now, beloved,” she exclaimed, “ thy promise! —and thou, oh blessed Saviour, before whose holy image I now, on bended knees, offer up my last supplication!—who seest the pile already laid to torment with infamous publicity thy too weak servant!—plead, oh plead forgiveness for this act, which hastens me, by but a few short moments, into the presence of an omnipotent, all-merciful creator !”

Ramiro listened to the words of the prostrate maiden with intense and agonised attention, and at the conclusion of her short but earnest prayer drew from his breast a glittering poignard — Hinzára snatched it hastily from his hand,—and the next moment fell a corpse at his feet !

The horror of the spectators, at this unlooked-for termination of Ramiro's interference—the consternation of the officials of the Holy Inquisition—the rage and invectives of the Governor—were such that, amidst the general confusion which ensued, Ramiro, snatching the poignard from the reeking body of his mistress, darted through the crowd, and effected his escape.—Don Guiterre vented his impotent rage on the lifeless body of his victim, by having it burnt, amidst the groans and indignant cries of the assembled multitude.

Every attempt to trace the flight of Don Ramiro failed; but information was eventually received, that an individual answering his description had embarked at Malaga, in a vessel bound to some Italian port.

The excitement caused by this tragic affair gradually subsided. Years rolled on—Abenhabuz was never again seen—and the fate of his daughter was nearly forgotten;—when one morning the Governor of Ronda was nowhere to be found. Diligent search was of course made, and at length his corpse was discovered in the rocky bed of the Guadiaro, immediately beneath the miraculous bridge, which was now seen for the first time!—On examining the body, it was found to be much bruised and mutilated, as if—which indeed was evident—Don Guiterre had fallen in an attempt to cross

the hazardous bridge, and although one deep wound seemed to have been inflicted by some sharp instrument, yet it might have been given by the pointed rocks with which the bed of the rivulet is strewed, and there was no other reason to suppose that he had fallen by the hands of bandits ; since nothing had been taken from his person. His sword was found lying near him, but it might have dropt from its scabbard.

The cause of the Governor's visit to this secluded spot nobody could divine ; but the general astonishment on this head was still further increased, when, a few days after, the body of a near relative of Don Guiterre—one of the principal officers of the Holy Inquisition—was discovered at the very same spot, and bearing marks of having met with a similar death.

A clue to the solution of these mysterious and appalling events was at length, however, obtained ; though it still left many of the particulars open to conjecture. An old and faithful servant of the late Governor was, not many days after, found in the bed of the stream, having also, as it appeared, fallen from the enchanted bridge. Life, however, was not extinct. He was conveyed to a neighbouring monastery, where every attention was paid to his wounds, though without the slightest hope of his ultimate recovery. The excessive pain, caused by a severe wound in the head, brought on delirium ; so that little

information could be gathered from him ; but in his paroxysms he raved of a brilliant light that shone constantly before his eyes, which, with piercing cries for mercy, intermixed with frightful imprecations on Don Guiterre, he fervently invoked.—But in the last moments of his wretched existence, he became somewhat more tranquil ; and the monk who attended him, (a brother of one of my distant ancestors) collected at intervals the following particulars of his melancholy story.

His master it appeared had willingly entered into the plot—already alluded to—projected by the old Moor. The inquisitorial visit, planned by these two fiends in human form, was brought about by information secretly furnished to the Holy Tribunal, by the wretched maniac himself. Their *professed* object in procuring Hinzára's incarceration was, to frighten her into a marriage with Don Guiterre, whose influence over the Inquisitor, his relative, was to be employed in procuring her liberation, on condition that she gave proof of her innocence by consenting to marry him.—Each of these miscreants imagined, however, that he was making a dupe of his confederate ; for each breathed only vengeance on the innocent Hinzára. Don Guiterre could not forgive her contemptuous rejection of his suit ; and, his ungovernable passion continuing unabated, he hoped, by acceding to the

terms on which only it was proposed, she should obtain her liberation,—to have her in his power to satisfy his revenge, after he had gratified his yet more hateful passion: or, should she, contrary to his expectations, continue obdurate, to feast his eyes on the tortures of his hapless victim. Abenhabuz, on the other hand, knew his daughter too well to imagine she would consent to purchase life on the terms proposed. His sole object was to procure her death,—which, as he conceived, was merited as much by her disobedience to his commands, as by the unpardonable sin of deserting the faith of her forefathers;—and, as he himself could not inflict the punishment without exciting suspicion, he hit upon the plan of making Don Guierre a tool to effect his purpose. But, in the words of the Roman Fabulist, “*Vindictæ cupidus sibi malum accersit.*” Each of these monsters reaped the just fruit of his crime.

Whether the terms of liberation before alluded to were ever proposed to the daughter of Abenhabuz, I cannot inform you, Don Carlos:—most probably not, however.—Don Guierre doubtless overrated his influence with the Holy Tribunal,—the vast powers and inaccessible character of which were at that early period of its establishment not known even to Spaniards themselves. At all events, the governor, finding that the doom of his victim was

irrevocably fixed, and—ignorant of the secret wishes of the Moor—fearing that the full weight of Abenhabuz's resentment would fall upon him on the discovery of the failure of their scheme,—resolved, ere the *Auto da fé* was announced to take place, to prevent the possibility of the Moor's attempting to save his daughter, by confessing the plot, and making known the share he—Guiteire—had taken in it.

The wretch, who, in his dying moments, confessed these atrocities, was an accomplice in the crime by which this object was attained.—The foul deed committed, the corpse of Abenhabuz was destroyed by quick lime, and his papers were minutely examined, lest any proof should be furnished by them of the plot against Hinzára. Letters were then found from the sons of the murdered Moor, (who it appeared had joined the discontented inhabitants of the Alpujarras, at that time about to take up arms against the government,) which brought to light a project on the eve of being carried into execution, to seize upon the city of Ronda. These, after being made up in a sealed parcel, were dropt, by the governor's faithful agent, on the road to Marbella, and, being picked up by a chance traveller, were brought to Don Guiterre.

The importance of their contents caused them of course to be forwarded to the seat of govern-

ment, accompanied by a statement, that diligent but unavailing search having been made for Abenhabuz, it was supposed he had escaped to the mountains, and must, in the hurry of his flight, have lost these papers, containing indubitable proofs of his treason.

The policy of keeping these events secret was suggested by the artful Guiterre, on the plea, that it might lead to the detection of other persons engaged in the conspiracy; which recommendation, having been approved of, it soon came to be believed that the missing Abenhabuz was, as well as his daughter, an inmate of the dungeon of the Inquisition.

By what means Don Guiterre met with his death still remained a matter of mystery.—By his servant's statement it appeared that he had fallen in an attempt to pass over the rustic bridge, leading to the cavern under the *quinta* of the deceased Moor; whither by an anonymous communication he had been invited to repair unattended, under the promise of having the spot shown to him where the Alchymist's riches were buried.—The wretched Lopez, who had followed his master at a distance, saw a bright light shining to point out the passage made across the deep chasm, and heard his cries on falling; but, overcome by fear, he immediately took to flight, and for obvious reasons had not given any information on the subject.

Whatever further particulars—if any—were gathered from him ere his death, never became public. Sufficient, however, was known to cause the spot to be held in great awe; so much so, indeed, that, after the miraculous abstraction of various goats, sheep, &c., from the flocks grazing in the neighbourhood, not a soul would venture near it; the common opinion being, that some vindictive fairy had taken up his abode in the cavern, and amused himself by playing off his malicious pranks upon mankind.

After a lapse of some years, a Hermit applied to the owner of the property, for permission to make the haunted cavern his cell; and, trusting that his prayers would be instrumental in laying the troublesome Sprite, his request was readily granted.

The holy man who thus proffered his good offices, though bent down and infirm, had not the eye of one stricken in years; neither did his flowing beard, though white as the undrifted snow on the surrounding mountain tops, appear to have been blanched so much by time, as by privations and sufferings. He went out but seldom, and then only to attend upon the sick and poor. Within the city walls he was never known to enter. He had travelled much—had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and visited the Holy house at Loreto—was known to carry on a correspondence with some of the first dig-

nitaries of the Pontifical City,—and never wanted money.

By his piety, munificence, and benevolence, Father Anselmo at length attained such celebrity throughout the country, that his prayers were considered nearly as efficacious as those of most saints.—He sunk gradually and quietly to his grave. Not having been seen for several days, those to whose wants he was in the daily habit of administering consulted together as to the steps to be taken to ascertain his fate. They determined to enter his cell, and, as he would never permit a soul to cross the bridge, procured a long ladder to enable them to effect their purpose. On gaining admission, they discovered Anselmo's body, stiffened unto death, in the attitude of prayer. His knees were bent before an Altar, on which stood a small gold crucifix, of exquisite workmanship; but his head had fallen forwards on his clasped hands.—By his side lay a poignard. Its point was corroded with the deep rust of years; but every other part of the shining blade bore evidence of the peculiar care which has been taken of its preservation. Its hilt was a glittering mass of costly diamonds.

From the deceased hermit's neck a small packet was suspended, containing a lock of auburn hair, and on the envelope, the following words were written, in Anselmo's hand. “ For

thee have I passed a life of celibacy and seclusion! — for disobeying thy sacred injunctions have I been sorely chastened! — Sainted Virgin! plead for me with our Heavenly Father, that the sins I have committed in this world may be forgiven in that which is to come! ”

It was evident,—said the worthy Padre, concluding his long story,—it was evident, Don Carlos, that his prayer could be addressed to no other than the Holy Virgin, Mother of our blessed Saviour,—and, consequently, that the lock of hair must have been her's. It was accordingly sent to Toledo, and deposited in the church of *San Juan de los Reyes*,—where a magnificent urn—now probably melted down into some atheistical French Marshal's soup tureen—enclosed for many years the precious relic. What became of the poignard I know not.

The pious Anselmo was buried with great pomp, and numberless miracles have been wrought at his grave;—the mischievous fairy feared to return to a place purified by so holy a person;—the passage leading to the subterranean apartments has long been filled up;—and the miraculous bridge decayed and was carried away by the stream.

We have put up a cross to scare away evil spirits; but they nevertheless say, that strange noises are yet heard, and flickering lights occa-

sionally seen in the vicinity. I do not attach much credit to such tales. " *Fallax vulgi judicium*," (the good Father loved a scrap of Latin) and—producing from his pocket a white cambric handkerchief, and wiping his forehead with it, as if to show he had some notion of the use to which the cavern was at the present day applied, he added—" I dare say you are equally sceptical."—I will now, Don Carlos, wish you a pleasant *Siesta*—"*Dios guard' usted*."*

Dios guarde à usted—God preserve you.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEPARTURE FOR MALAGA—SCENERY ON AND DANGERS OF THE ROAD TO EL BURGO—FINE VIEW FROM CASARABONELA—AN INDEPENDENT INNKEEPER— A SPANISH BATTLE, ATTENDED WITH MORE DECISIVE RESULTS THAN USUAL—DESCRIPTION OF CASARABONELA—COMELINESS OF ITS WASHING NYMPHS—ROAD TO MALAGA—RIVER GUADALJORCE—SIGILA OF THE ROMANS—CARTAMA.

BIDDING adieu to Ronda,—its fruitful groves, crystal springs, snow-white bread, and jet-black eyes,—we will take the road to Malaga.

At about a mile and a half from the town, the road arrives at and passes under a long aqueduct, by means of which a stream is conveyed across the valley, for the supply of the fountains of the Mercadillo ; thereby saving to its inhabitants the expense of sinking deep wells in the rocky hill.

At the end of another half league, the road having gained a slight acclivity, commands a fine view of the venerable old city and its fertile plain ; but diving thence into a dark and narrow ravine, a contrast of the wildest character presents itself, and the road winds for many

miles amongst the rugged roots of the *old women's teeth*, already noticed.—These have certainly not had the effect of grinding the path smooth—for a more execrable *trocha* it never has been my fate to ride over. Part of it is so bad,—resembling a petrified honeycomb of Brobdignag dimensions,—that our horses had to pause at every step, and consider into which of the holes presented to their choice they should next venture to put their feet.

The scenery is splendid. It consists of terrific precipices and impending mountains—foaming torrents and rustic bridges—umbageous oaks and wide-spreading cork trees. But our enjoyment of these wild beauties was considerably diminished, as well by the torrents of rain that fell without ceasing from the time of our entering the mountains, as from the attention it was necessary to give our horses.

Our progress, necessarily slow over this *camino de perdices*,* was yet further retarded by numberless trains of loaded mules, which, having left Ronda with the earliest dawn, had gained an advance upon us over the plain, and, labouring under the bulky produce of the fair, were filing slowly along the same narrow track as ourselves, restricting our pace to an

* *Road of partridges.* Any particularly wild and stony track is so called in Spain, from such localities being the favourite resort of that bird.

average rate of something less than three miles an hour. Vain were all our endeavours to gain the head of the lengthened column ; — for though we seized every opportunity the rugged road presented of pushing on with our less burthened animals, yet no sooner had we succeeded in passing one string of mules, than we found ourselves in contact with the tail of another.

Gradually, however, the *Cafilas** became wider and wider apart ; and on arriving within a few miles of the town of El Burgo, an open and comparatively level space presenting itself, unobstructed by man or beast, we began to indulge the hope that our perseverance had earned its reward, and that thenceforth a clear road lay before us. Our impatient steeds gladly availed themselves of the permission to quicken their pace ; but five minutes' canter carried us across the verdant glade, when we again found ourselves immured within a rocky ravine, shadowed by the dark forest, and — to our disappointment—in contact with yet another string of mules and *boricos*.

The pass was more rugged than any we had hitherto met with, and the sure-footed animals, with noses almost touching the stony path, were scrambling down the rough descent with caprinine agility ; though sometimes—thrown off

* A train of men and beasts, from the Arabic, *Kafel*.

their equilibrium by the size rather than the weight of their burthens,—they would stagger from side to side, so as to make their destruction appear inevitable. Righting themselves, however, in the most scientific manner, and making a short pause, as if to recover their self-possession, they would resume their perilous undertaking, without further incitement than an “*arre!*”* glad enough not to *feel* the usual accompaniment on their houghs or ribs.

Considering it advisable to follow the muleteers’ example, we too allowed our beasts to use their own discretion in the selection of their stepping-places by giving them their heads; and, folding our cloaks about us, so as to afford the utmost possible protection against the pelting storm, we resigned ourselves to fate; there being nothing for it, as the philosophic Sancho says, but patience and a shrug of the shoulders.

Whilst proceeding with our necks thus in chancery—sliding, stumbling, and dripping along, in rear of the closely formed column—we came most unexpectedly upon a peasant, mounted on a sleek mule, who, taking advantage of a favourable spot, had drawn up on the road side to allow the train to pass. The circumstance of his being the only person we had

* The cry by which muleteers keep their animals on the move. This word is the root of the term *arriero*, applied generally to the drivers of beasts of burthen.

met journeying towards Ronda, would of itself have caused us to notice him, but there was something in the man's deportment that peculiarly attracted observation. In the first place, he suffered all his fellow-countrymen to pass without deigning to return their usual courteous salutation ; in the next, he was smoking a *tabaco** instead of a *papelito* ; and, lastly, he was muffled up so completely in his *manta* that every part of his dress was concealed, and of his face little more than the eyes could be seen. These were dark, piercing, and inquisitive, and their sidelong glances, evidently following their owner's thoughts, were directed with searching scrutiny on the tempting bales that passed successively before him.

So thoroughly was the attention of this person devoted to this interesting examination, that, concealed as we were by the moving mountains of Manchester goods which preceded us, our military cortège, bringing up the rear of the column, took him completely by surprise. For the moment all presence of mind forsook him. His left arm, by an instinctive jerk, removed the hat from his head ; disclosing a most sinister countenance, and a brace of pistols stuck in his worsted sash ; whilst, with

* A cigar, made entirely of tobacco (in the usual way), is so called by the country people, who very seldom consume "the weed" in that form.

the other, he hurriedly made the *cruz de admirado*,* muttering, at the same time, the usual passing benediction. With the flurry of a person exerting himself to *appear* composed, he then, to our great amusement and astonishment, began singing one of the peculiar ditties of the *arrieros*, at the very extent of his voice.

These sudden transitions, first from arrogance to servility, then from alarm to merriment, struck us all very forcibly ; and each was pondering to himself,—for it rained too hard to render talking agreeable,—what could possibly have given rise to them, when, reaching the bottom of the descent, a sharp turn in the road brought us in view of a party of some twelve or fifteen persons, who, partially concealed in a thicket of underwood, were assembled under the shelter of a huge cork tree, about fifty paces off the road. Though habited as *Contrabandistas*, they were armed up to the teeth, and had a far more offensive than defensive appearance. Most of the party were grouped round the stem of the huge tree, under protection of which a fire was struggling for existence against the storm and rain ; but some of the men were scattered amongst the brushwood, and seemed to be girthing up and preparing their horses for a start.

* *The cross of astonishment*—meaning the hurried cross which a devout Romanist describes upon his person, whenever unexpectedly exposed to danger.

All eyes were anxiously fixed upon us the moment we came in sight, showing that the muleteer's song had not been a spontaneous outbreak of hilarity ; and the examination of our persons was evidently productive of some little distrust and apprehension ; for though the folds of our capacious cloaks screened our persons most effectually from view, yet the glazed caps that protuded above, and the steel scabbards that peeped out below, sufficiently showed our military calling.

A short and hurried consultation was the result of their scrutiny. That ended, one of the party, who seemed to be its chief, stepped a few paces towards us, whilst the rest, as if wishing to avoid observation, resumed their interrupted occupation at the fire.

The person who thus put himself forward was a handsome, jolly-looking fellow, who, despite the heat of some fifty Andalusian summers, was bordering on corpulency. Richly dressed and well armed (as well with assurance as with blunderbuss and pistols), he was, in every sense of the word, *un hombre de bigote* ;* and, saluting our party most courteously, he requested our knightships would alight and warm ourselves at their fire ; and, if we could put up with road-way fare, partake of their poor breakfast.

* Literally, a *man of whisker*—but meaning a bold fellow.

Treating this invitation as—that which no doubt it was meant to be,—a mere *compliment d'usage*, we politely, but with the brevity which the Spanish language admits of, excused ourselves (for the weather was anti-ceremonious), and passed on without even exchanging a single word amongst ourselves.

That fatal effects are frequently the consequence of too great *loquacity*, no one will venture to dispute; but that similar results should spring from over-*taciturnity*, many may be disposed to controvert. Voltaire (I think) relates a ludicrous story of some drowning Dutchmen, who would not part with their *pipes* to cry help; but the fact may be doubted. In the present case, however, several luckless wights were actually throttled for want of one saving word of English!—But I am anticipating the catastrophe of our adventure, if so it deserve to be called.

We had no sooner passed beyond hearing of the suspicious-looking troop, than a peasant, who had stuck close to our heels all the morning, rode up to inform us that the persons we had just met were *muy mala gente*,* and that we had had a most fortunate escape.—We too were pretty well convinced that the party had halted at that retired spot with the intention of taking something more substantial than

* Very bad people.

breakfast; but we did not feel surprised at their allowing us to pass without molestation, since our party was strong and our baggage light.

On our arrival at Malaga next day, we learnt that a sharp affair had taken place near El Burgo, between some of the government troops and a gang of robbers; and the following afternoon, when riding on the Alameda, whom should we meet but our quondam friend, and two of his companions, proceeding under an escort to the city gaol. He recognized us immediately, but his breeding was by no means improved by the air of the city;—the friendly greeting of the Sierra being changed into a torrent of maledictions.

Curious to learn the particulars of the case, and cause of his abuse of the *malditos Ingleses*, we made particular inquiries on the subject, and learnt, to our surprise, that we had ourselves been mainly instrumental in causing the apprehension of the robbers. Deceived by our being muffled up in our cloaks, they had taken us for one of the detachments of Spanish troops, which, at the breaking up of the fair, are sent from Ronda to patrol all the principal roads leading through the Serranía. The vidette whom we came upon so unexpectedly had not been able to give the bandits sufficient time, either to prepare for action, or to conceal themselves;

which accounted for the confusion so perceptible when we first discovered them ; as, expecting to have easy work with the muleteers, they had secured their horses in the thicket, to have all hands ready for the ransack.

Trusting that our suspicions had not been excited, and relieved from all apprehension of encountering another patrole for some hours, they had stopped, and were in the act of plundering one of the richly-laden trains that we had passed in the morning, when the real *gens d'armes* came to the rescue. In their fancied security, the robbers had gone so deliberately to work, that the notice of their scout had not given them time to regain their tethered horses ; and in the scuffle that ensued, three of the gang were captured, whose necks, as we were afterwards informed, were in the due course of justice submitted to the *garrote*.

I must now return to El Burgo,—which place we were five hours in reaching, although its distance from Ronda is scarcely eleven miles ; indeed, in the measure of the country, it is reckoned but two leagues.

El Burgo de Ronda (as it is generally called) is a miserable village, containing about 200 *Vecinos* ; but it is most romantically situated, in a fertile plain encompassed with magnificent woods and mountains, and watered by numerous springs. We arrived thoroughly drenched,

and were glad to halt for a short time, to breathe our horses and dry our cloaks. Towards noon, the weather becoming more propitious, we continued our journey to Casarabonela. The road is very bad all the way, though somewhat better than we had gone over in the morning. The scenery is not by any means so fine.

The direct road to Malaga avoids Casarabonela, leaving it, perched on the side of a steep mountain, some thousand feet above, and about half a mile off, on the right; but the view from the summit of the ridge overlooking the town is so grand, that I would strongly recommend all travellers to ascend the rugged mountain, even at the cost of an hour's delay, and risk of a displaced collar-bone.

The little town, embosomed in groves of fruit-trees, lies about half way down the southern side of the mountain. On its right, and somewhat overlooking it, an old Moorish fortress occupies a cragged eminence; its smoked and shattered walls seeming, after the manner of its founders, to be mourning with dirt and ashes the loss of the rich plain spread out beneath; over which, in former days, they held despotic dominion.

This vast plain stretches south, to where the winding Guadaljorce discharges itself into the ocean; the Sierra Gibalgália rising "like a huge

incumbrance" from its centre, and sheltering the mouldering walls of the famed city of Cartáma. Along the eastern side of the valley, the mountains of Alhama, the Alpujarras, and snowy ridge of Granada, successively overtop the rugged ramifications of the Sierra of Almoxia, which bound it in that direction. To the west, the Sierras of Alhaurin and Mijas present themselves, rising abruptly from the plain. Between these two masses of mountains, and beyond the plain, a wide expanse of the blue and glassy Mediterranean is visible, studded with white sails, bearing the rich produce of Malaga to every part of the world.

The descent to the town is good, but tedious,—winding through luxuriant vineyards and orchards. The vines are here trained on frames raised about five feet from the ground; a method by no means general in Spain, and which, though certainly more pleasing to the eye, is not considered so favourable to the fruit as that usually adopted.

The Inn looked dirty and comfortless, and its keeper was so imbued with the constitutional doctrines of liberty and equality,—then much in vogue,—that he would hardly condescend to answer our questions concerning accommodation, and was perfectly indignant at our suggesting the expediency of his rising from his seat, and showing us the way to his stable.

—“There was the door of his house if we chose to enter; if not, we had but to suit ourselves elsewhere.”

Aware that the town did not possess another *posada*, and that the nearest *Venta* on the road was at a distance of several leagues, the dignified innkeeper trusted, from the lateness of the hour, that we should necessarily be obliged to place ourselves at his mercy. We, on the other hand, determined, if possible, to obtain accommodation elsewhere, and seeing the lady-owner of the adjoining house standing at her door, asked her if she knew any one who, for a handsome consideration, would furnish us with a night’s lodging.

After a short parley, it was agreed that her house and stable should be placed at our “*disposicion*” for the night, and sundry of our hard dollars at her’s in perpetuity. The publican—who, pending the negociation, sat at his portal puffing a cigar, affecting the utmost indifference to its result, but in reality listening impatiently to every word that passed—no sooner found how good a thing had slipped through his fingers, than he started up in the most ungovernable passion, venting his rage upon our buxom hostess, somewhat in the following strain—“*Mala Pascua te dé Dios! Higa de puta ruin!**—May you be burnt for a witch

* God give you a bad Easter—*desunt cætera*.

before the year 's over, for taking the bread out of a neighbour's mouth!—May the ghost of your cuckold husband appear at your bedside this night, you shameless wanton!—May”—“*Que chusco es el tuerto!*”* interrupted the incensed fair one, in a scream that completely drowned the rest of his good wishes, to whatever extent they may have been carried—“Look at home, *Cabron*,† ere you call an honest man cuckold, and a virtuous woman wanton.”—“Virtuous woman, indeed!” resumed he of the Venta; “and admits four smooth-chinned *Inglese*s into her house, to say nothing of their two stout grooms, and that monkey-faced Portuguese, their guide; whom I know right well, though he has grown fat under English feeding; and whom, fat or lean, no virtuous woman would suffer within reach of her nostrils.”

This unlooked-for attack on “lazy Antonio” drew a furious cross-fire upon the irritated *Ventero*; for whilst our hostess flinched not one inch from his direct and somewhat scandalous assault—*par pari referens*—“*Vosse mercé*” opened a fire of loud, nasal Portuguese-Spanish upon his flank, that exceeded in noise the braying of a whole troop of asses.

This, in its turn, unkennelled the publican's

* How droll the squint-eyed fellow is!

† He-goat—which, in allusion to his horns, is used as a term of reproach.

Cara Sposa. The combat recovered its equilibrium, and seemed likely to be terminated only by the coming night ; for all our endeavours to withdraw the valorous Antonio proved unavailing. But, in the words of the Manchegan Knight, "*siempre deja la ventura, una puerta abierta.*"* The publican and his wife, though proof against the reputation-killing batteries of their open enemies, could not stand before an insidious covert attack that was now about to open upon them.

The town's people, amongst whom the liberal *ventero* did not appear to be in good odour, flocked in crowds to the scene of action, and, though professing to take no part in the fray, yet, by whooping, hollowing, and laughing, whenever the widow and her Portuguese ally fired a successful shot at their adversaries, they gave the former a "moral support," that, in its results, proved quite as efficacious as an active interference.

The Innkeeper—who hitherto had manfully confronted his opponents—now saw that victory was no longer attainable, and abandoned the field; leaving his light-tongued helpmate to cover his retreat. This task she performed with consummate ability, supporting her nearly exhausted volleys of words by screams of defiance, and various offensive gesticulations. The

* Fortune always leaves a door open.

last distinguishable turn of reproach that reached our ears, was *Alarbes*!* which she seemed to consider the *ne plus ultra* of vituperation, and certainly was the very last epithet we had any right to expect would be applied to fair-skinned mortals like ourselves, by such a bronze-complexioned semi-morisco.

The battle over, and stable door unlocked,—the key of which, firmly grasped in her right hand, had been the standard under which our hostess had fought and conquered,—we led our tired horses in, leaving her to fire a round of taunts in celebration of the victory.

Casarabonela is a clean and well-paved town. For the former quality, it is principally indebted to a stream of limpid water that, issuing from the side of the mountain, rushes down the steep streets, carrying every thing offensive before it. Its supply is so bountiful that, besides doing the scavenging duty of the town, and turning a number of mill-wheels, it is led off in irrigating channels through all the gardens and orchards in the neighbourhood.

The inhabitants are celebrated for their comeliness, and I willingly bear witness to the truth of common report in this particular instance; having seldom seen more lovely faces than amongst those of the bright-eyed, fair-complexioned damsels of this mountain town.

* A corruption of the word *Arabes*.

Nor are their figures unworthy of note, albeit, their limbs are something too muscular for Naiades and Oreades.

It is meet, by the way, that I should explain *how* I became acquainted with this latter fact relating to their secret history, lest scandal should blight the fair fame of the Casarabonelian maidens. The truth is, then, we arrived at the town upon a *washing day*, and in taking our evening stroll, chanced to come upon the congregated village nymphs engaged knee-deep at their lavatory vocation in the mill stream; jumping and stamping with all their might upon the soiled garments of the preceding week; and certainly displaying more of their fair skins than might reasonably have been expected to meet the eyes of strangers. So they appeared to think also; for our sudden advent created an extraordinary sensation amongst them. Some had sufficient presence of mind to get on dry ground ere they loosened the bandage that confined their petticoats at the knee; others, regardless of consequences, let them drop in the water; and some few were so completely bewildered as to fancy their only chance of obtaining concealment was by squatting down, even in the midst of the stream.— All laughed, but there was nothing either immodest or rude in their merriment. They were evidently ashamed that their bare legs (albeit

not to be ashamed of) had been exposed to our gaze ; but, at the same time, they could not but be amused at the various extraordinary expedients resorted to to conceal them.

As we could not accuse ourselves of any indiscreet curiosity in this matter—for we had followed a beaten path leading to the old castle—we had but to compliment them on their fair skins and sound understandings, and pass on. Indeed, I suspect it was merely our being strangers that had occasioned their modesty to be so put to the blush ; for their own countrymen must have been passing to and fro the whole day, in proceeding to their work in the fields. Such is the force of habit.

The view from the Old Castle, looking towards Malaga, is nearly equal to that from the top of the mountain ; and in the opposite direction, the outline of the Sierra itself is very bold, and is set off to great advantage by the rich foliage of well-grown forest trees that clothe its rough side.

Our landlady's will was better than her accommodation. Our beds, which (so careful was she of her reputation) were all in one small room, looked well enough ; but the somniferous animals domesticated therein were so numerous, so vigorous, and so insatiable, that we gladly hailed the dawn of day to escape from their persevering attentions.

The road down the side of the mountain (in its windings upwards of a mile) is far from good, and it is only tolerable after gaining the plain, until it passes by a ford to the left bank of the Guadaljorce, when it becomes practicable for carriages all the way to Malaga.

The course of this river (*Guada al jars*—River of the Guard) is most eccentric. It rises considerably to the eastward of the city of Antequera, almost, it may be said, on the margin of the Genil, and running, during the early part of its course, nearly parallel to that river, seems, like it, to be directing itself to the Guadalquivír. But, after following this westerly course for upwards of thirty miles, it turns abruptly from the level country, in a southerly direction; pierces its way through a most intricate country to Alora; washes the base of the rock on which that ancient city is perched; and then, entering the vale of Malaga, winds round to the eastward, fertilizing that spacious plain; and discharges itself into the Mediterranean:—thus, from its source to its mouth, describing a perfect semicircle.

In the centre of the extensive vale of Malaga, the volume of the Guadaljorce is increased by the junction of the Rio Grande—a far less considerable stream, which comes down from the mountains encircling Toloz, Monda, and other Roman-Moorish fortresses, that guard the passes on the western side of the plain.

Carter, describing this latter river from its source to its embouchure, states it to be the *Sigila* of the Romans. Should this be the case, (though it seems probable that the larger stream of the two would have carried its name to the sea) we have yet to learn by what name the Guadaljorce was known in former days.—I mention this, as I shall hereafter refer to the subject in speaking of the *Salsus*, which, it strikes me forcibly, was the name given formerly to the *upper* portion of the Guadaljorce —*i. e.* before it was lost in the rocky defiles to the north of Alora.

The Guadaljorce—jore—joz—and—quivirejo, (for it is equally known by all those names) runs in a wide, pebbly bed, and is readily enough forded at all seasons, excepting when heavy rains happen to have caused it to overflow its banks. Under any circumstances, however, Malaga may be reached by making a *détour* to the westward; crossing the Rio Grande at Casa Palma, and from thence, following the road by Cartama, down the right bank of the Guadaljorce, until arrived abreast of the village of Aljaurinejo, where a bridge presents itself.

The direct Road from Casarabonela crosses the River, previous to its confluence with the Rio Grande; and about a mile beyond the ford, reaches the *Venta de Cartáma*. This is often made the resting-place between Ronda and

Malaga. Now, as I write with the view of tempting others to ride after me, I feel called upon, despite the poor accommodation of Casarabonela, to advise future travellers to put up with it; for certainly a more wretched hovel than the Venta of Cartáma I never looked into. A single glance produces an irritation of the skin, and a sympathetic restlessness of the fingers.

Proceeding onwards, a view of the town of Cartáma is obtained on the right. It lies somewhat removed from the bank of the Guadaljorce, upon the north side of the Sierra Gibalgália. The harvest of statues, pavements, coins, &c. gathered amongst the ruins of this ancient Roman city, has been very abundant. A few years back it possessed a Forum, Porticoes, and Temples, in a very perfect state. But, though the Spaniards talk much of their antiquities, they trouble themselves but little about their preservation; and Cartáma contains now scarcely any thing worthy of note.

From the *Venta de Cartáma* to Malaga the road is practicable for carriages to an extent of thirteen miles and a half; making the total distance from Casarabonela twenty-five miles;—from Ronda, forty-five.

CHAPTER IX.

UNPREPOSSESSING APPEARANCE OF MALAGA—DREAD OF YELLOW FEVER—THE ALAMEDA—DERIVATION OF THE CITY'S NAME, AND SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY—THE GIBRALFARO AND ALCAZABA—CATHEDRAL—CIGAR MANUFACTORY—CALCULATION OF THE SUPPLY AND CONSUMPTION OF CIGARS IN SPAIN—MALAGA FIGURES—POPULATION—TRADE—WINE—HARBOUR—SOCIETY—VISIT TO EL RETIRO—THE FANDANGO AND CACHUCHA.

THE appearance of Malaga on a near approach is mean and unprepossessing ; nor is this an optical deception, for the suburbs are miserably poor and excessively dirty. This last, indeed, is a fault that the city may be charged with generally ; and such is the contempt in which the virtue of cleanliness is held by the inhabitants, that, though the little river *Guadalmedina** winds its way through the heart of the city, requiring only to be properly husbanded to keep the place sweet and clean ; yet, from mismanagement, it is itself suffered to become a nuisance ; the scanty stream left after supplying the fountains being in summer so ob-

* River of the city.

structed by heaps of filth, brought out from the city, and thrown into its wide bed, that not having sufficient power to carry off the accumulated mass of corruption, it serves only (by keeping it constantly moist) to render the process of putrefaction more fetid and deadly.

The calm indifference with which the inhabitants of Malaga endure the intolerable nuisance thus generated by their improvidence and indolence, and the patience with which they look forward to the winter torrents to rid them of it, contrast singularly enough with the immoderate alarm occasioned by the arrival of a vessel from the Habana, and the haste with which they send it from their port to undergo purification at Minorca. Thus, whilst dreading most unwarrantably the importation of the yellow fever from a place which, at the time, perhaps, was perfectly free from it, they disregard altogether the little forcing-bed of miasmatic diseases, situated under their own immediate noses.

The city, it is true, has suffered so severely from visitations of this terrible disease, that the inhabitants may well dread its recurrence ; but since they are aware that Coin, Alhaurin, and other places in the neighbourhood, situated in a purer atmosphere, are beyond its influence ; surely they ought to look at home for the causes of its fatal virulence, if not of its actual production.

The winter torrents come down in great force, and, from the proximity of the mountains, the Guadalmedina rises very suddenly ; rendering a wide bed quite necessary to carry it off, as well as strong walls to resist and direct it in its course. But, in spite of these precautions, the lower portions of the city are frequently inundated.

A wooden bridge, on stone piers, keeps up the communication between the two parts of the city during *sweet winter* ; but the bed of the river, which is eighty yards wide, may be crossed dry-foot the greater part of the year.

The principal portion of the city is on the left bank of the Guadalmedina. Indeed, the part situated on the western side is, properly speaking, only a large suburb. The change on passing the bridge is most agreeable ; the first object that presents itself being the Alameda, a fine open space, lined on three sides with handsome houses, and on the fourth open to the refreshing westerly breezes. A shaded carriage drive goes round the quadrangle ; and down its centre, a broad gravel walk, furnished with seats, and planted with flowers and shrubs, affords the public a delightful promenade.

On a Sunday evening this *Paseo* is crowded with all classes of the inhabitants ; and the dark voluptuous Malagueña, as, with mincing step, she threads the motley throng, fails not to display her skill in *fanning* signals to her various

acquaintances. The stranger, whilst following, with admiring eyes, the graceful movements of the fluttering parchment,* little suspects that he is himself the subject matter of its telegraphic communications.

Besides the Alameda, there are several fine open spaces in the city, but certainly not one good street, although some few pretend to the convenience of a *trottoir*. The inns are tolerably good. That which is dignified by the name of "*Los tres Reyes*" was the best, at the period of my last visit.

Malaga is said by some to have received its name from the Hebrew work *Malach*, (signifying to reign) and to have been founded by the Phoenicians, eight centuries before the advent of our Saviour. Others, on the contrary, maintain that its name is derived from the Phœnician language; the same word *Malach* signifying in it *to salt*; and that the city was so called from the quantity of fish taken and cured there. The learned Florez, who inclines to this latter opinion, states that the cured fish of Malaga was so esteemed at Rome that a body corporate of merchants was established in that Capital of the world, under the name of

* The fans mostly used are made of kid-skin, richly gilt at the back, and painted on the other side.—A Spanish belle does not hesitate to expend thirty or forty dollars on her fan, though she should have to live on *Gazpacho* for a month, to make up for her extravagance.

Malacitani, as proved by an inscription found in the *Campo di Flora*.

By the Romans the city was called Malaca ; and became one of their *confederates*, (of which there were but three in Boetica) as well as the great emporium for their Spanish trade ; although Pomponius Mela speaks slightly of its importance.* It was captured by the Moors under Tarik, A. D. 715 ; and probably such portions of the walls as still exist were built about that period ; but the fortress on the *Gibralfaro*, and the *Alcazaba*, or Royal Palace, are said to have been erected only towards the end of the thirteenth century ; when the Moors, by the rapid progress of the christian arms, (which had already wrested from them both Cordoba and Valencia) saw the necessity of strengthening the towns of their diminished territories.

Malaga had become a separate kingdom, however, as early as the beginning of the eleventh century ; when the Caliphat of Cordoba ceased under the imbecile Haccham II.

The first who mounted the throne of Malaga was Ali Aben Hameth. But it does not appear that the crown was regularly handed down in one family ; it seems rather to have been a constant object of strife ; and its power over other states seems to have varied according to the talents of him who wore it ; for sometimes

* *De situ Orbis*: Lib. 2. Cap. 6.

we find the sovereign of Malaga owning obedience to the Princes of Seville and Cordoba; at others claiming dominion over those kingdoms; and generally, over the city of Granada.

Ishmael, a prince of the house of Alhamares, was the last king who dwelt within the walls of the *Alcazaba*. From the time of his being called to the throne of Granada, (A.D. 1313), Malaga was governed by a prince of the royal blood.

Malaga was one of the last cities that fell to the Christian arms, Ferdinand and Isabella having succeeded in capturing it, after an obstinate siege, only five years prior to the conquest of Granada, viz., A.D. 1487.

The *Gibralfaro* is, or rather has been, a fortress of great strength and considerable extent. Its ruins occupy the crest of a rugged mountain, from which, and a signal tower that formerly stood on the summit, it receives its present name, *Gibel al faro*.

The rocky ridge stretches east and west along the Mediterranean shore, falling precipitously towards the beach, and roughly and rapidly in the opposite direction, but less abruptly as it approaches the city, which it partially shelters to the S.E. A narrow, walled passage connects the castle with the *Alcazaba*, which, standing on a plateau near the termination of the rocky tongue, has a better and more

immediate command over the city and harbour than even the *Gibralfaro* itself.

The walls of the fortress were evidently constructed at the cost of some proud Roman temple, and were probably run up in great haste, as numerous fragments of columns, capitals, &c., are built in with the more suitable bricks which the Moors generally used when they bestowed pains upon their works.

The walls of the Alcazaba, like those of the fortress, are studded with these venerable fragments, and are in an equally ruinous condition. The principal gateway is, however, tolerably perfect, and affords a fine specimen of Moorish architecture. The Alcazaba answered the triple purpose of a royal palace, an advanced work of the more elevated citadel, and a dock or arsenal for the city galleys. The docks were situated under its north wall; but they have long since been buried under the ruins of the impending building, and are now covered over with houses.

The Cathedral of Malaga, commenced about the middle of the sixteenth century, is a handsome building; but, from one only of its towers having been finished, its appearance is much injured. How frequently has it happened, and how much is it to be regretted, that edifices, dedicated to the worship of the Deity, have, as in this instance, been planned and partly

executed on a scale of magnificence totally disproportioned to the means possessed for completing them according to the original design.

Besides the deformities that offend the eye in these patched-up buildings, and the unpleasant feeling to which the contemplation of an unfinished Christian church ever gives birth, a deplorable conviction is forced upon the mind, that these splendid piles were erected rather with a view to commemorate their *founders* than to promote the well-being of mankind ; and that large sums of money have thus been vainly squandered, or, at best, lain profitless for ages ; which might have been otherwise beneficially employed in the interests of Christianity.

Let me not lead my reader to suppose, however, that I dislike to see stately temples raised for the worship of our Creator. On the contrary, the lofty towers, high vaulted aisles, and gorgeous windows of many of our Christian churches are well calculated to predispose the mind to devotion ; since, wonderful as they are, considered as works of man, how contemptible do they appear, compared with the mighty works of *our* Maker ! and, viewed in this light, they cannot but impress us with a sense of His power and our utter insignificance.

With such feelings I have ever regarded the splendid cathedrals of Antwerp, Cöln, Rheims,

Ratisbon, Vienna, &c., which are amongst the number of those that remain to this day in a more or less unfinished state, though, in other respects, they are some of the finest specimens of Gothic architecture extant.

The cathedral of Malaga is of noble proportions, but of a heavy, over-ornamented, composite style of architecture ; and it is disfigured in an extraordinary degree with gilt chapels, carved saints, and votive offerings. It contains little worthy of notice besides the carved wood-work of the seats in the choir, the jewels, dresses, &c., in the *Tesoreria**, and one good painting by Alonzo Cano, in the chapel of the *Rosario*.

The tower of the cathedral is 300 feet in height, and commands a fine view, though not equal to that obtained from the *Gibralfaro*, since this latter includes the whole city, as well as the extensive plain of the Guadaljorce, and the various ranges of mountains that stretch along the Mediterranean shore between Monda and Marbella.

Immediately under the *Alcazaba* stands an immense and rather handsome edifice, built not many years since for a custom-house ; but, meeting with few customers in that line of business, it has recently been converted into a Royal cigar manufactory, and is now in a thriving condition.

* Treasury.

Previous to the establishment of this assistant, the Royal manufactory of Seville had imposed on it the *impossible* task of supplying cigars and snuff for the whole of Spain ; and even now, with such additional means of production, the demand is *ten times* greater than the two factories have the power of furnishing, as the following statement will, I think, pretty clearly show.

The manufactory of Malaga employs 700 persons (women and children) in making cigars. A good pair of hands at the work may furnish three hundred a day ; but (as the children cannot make half that number), taking the average at two hundred, gives a daily supply of 140,000. The manufactory of Seville employs 1,000 men and 1,600 women. These 2,600 persons may be calculated as furnishing, on an average, 250 each per diem ; or, altogether, 650,000. Add to this number the 140,000 made at Malaga, and we have 790,000 as the "total of the whole" manufactured daily in Spain. But, as there are but six working days in the week, and seven smoking—indeed the lungs ought to be calculated as doing double work in Spain on Sundays and Saints' days, whilst the hands are quite idle—we must reduce that amount by one seventh, to obtain the average number of cigars furnished for each day's consumption throughout the year, which amounts therefore but to 677,143.

Now, taking the population of the country at 11,000,000 of souls, and supposing (which is a moderate computation) that but one million and a half of that number are consumers of tobacco, it is evident that Spain, with her present means, can supply her smokers with but *seven sixteenths* of a cigar *per ora, per diem*; and, consequently, as my proposition advanced, with less than one tenth part of the demand.

It follows, as a corollary, that great encouragement is given to the pernicious habits of smuggling and smoking *papelitos**.

The persons employed in the manufacture of cigars are paid at the rate of one *real vellon* for fifty, which enables even a first-rate maker to earn but fifteen pence a day. The best cigars are made entirely of Habana tobacco, and are sold at the factory at the rate of thirty *reales vellon* a hundred, or about three farthings, English, each. The second quality, composed of mixed tobaccos, (that is, the interior of Habana leaf, and the outside of Virginia) cost eighteen *reales vellon* per hundred, or something under a half-penny each.

It may be seen, from this statement of the cost of cigars of the Royal Manufactory, that smuggling cannot but prosper; since, at the

* The name given to cigars composed of chopped tobacco rolled up in *paper*, the latter item furnishing by far the greater portion of the *smoke*.

Habana, the very best cigars are sold for twelve dollars a thousand (or a trifle above a half-penny each), whilst those of inferior quality may be had for one fourth that price.

One of the most interesting sights of Malaga is the *Studio* of Señor Leon, the most renowned of the numerous modellers in clay, for which the city is celebrated. His figures are admirably executed, as well as strikingly characteristic; and, from first to last, are the work of himself and family. His sons form them by hand of a very ductile clay; he goes over such parts as require the finish of an experienced artist; and they are then passed over to his daughters, who give them life by their exquisite taste and skilful management of the pencil. The price is high, the most simple figures costing four dollars (about seventeen shillings) each. A group of nine equestrian figures that Señor Leon had just executed for the *Infante* Don Francisco de Paula, when I last visited Malaga, he valued at nine thousand *reales vellon*, or ninety four pounds!

The population of Malaga is estimated at sixty thousand souls. It was formerly much greater, and, not many years since, considerably less, having been reduced from 80,000 to 40,000, by repeated visitations of the yellow fever, about the commencement of the present century. But the city has been exempted from

any very severe infliction of this scourge for some years past, and the amount of its population, and, consequently, its commercial prosperity, are rapidly increasing.

The place is celebrated for its manufactures of silk, linen, and hats; but the quantity of these articles now made is trifling, the greater portion of the inhabitants being employed in the more profitable occupation of preparing wines and dried fruits for the foreign markets.

Upwards of 18,000 butts of wine—sweet and dry—are annually shipped from Malaga, of which the chief part is taken by the Americans; but a vast quantity of the latter, under the name of *Malaga Sherry*, finds its way also into the cellars of “*the trade*” in England; whence, after undergoing a simple metonymical process, it flows down the public throat under its new name of “old brown,” or, perchance, “curiously old dry *Sherry*.”

The cured fish of Malaga, though not so celebrated as in the gastronomic days of ancient Rome, continues nevertheless to be a profitable branch of its trade; anchovies being annually exported from thence, to the amount of 20,000 quintals.

The export of olive oil is also very great, the average quantity being about 10,000 *arrobas* per annum. But, perhaps, the most profitable article of produce shipped from Malaga is fruit

—almonds, oranges, and raisins ; the preparation of which costs little, whilst they are always sure to find a market and fetch a good price. The quantity exported is enormous.

The harbour of Malaga is artificially formed by a stone pier, that, protruding upwards of a quarter of a mile into the sea, screens it perfectly from the prevailing easterly gales. In the opposite direction it is nearly as effectually sheltered by the coast itself, which bends for some distance to the S.W. So that, in fact, the anchorage is exposed only to a due south wind, which, besides being one that seldom blows in this part of the Mediterranean, cannot, from the proximity of the African shore, occasion a heavy swell.

The depth of water inside the mole is not sufficient to allow line of battle ships to lie there ; and the port is otherwise inconvenient, from the difficulty of "making" it, when the wind is blowing strong on shore. But it is an excellent place of refuge for steamers, which need not apprehend so much the danger of getting on a lee shore. A light-house stands on the pier head, and the entrance of the harbour is guarded by several batteries.

The society of Malaga is very changeable. During the constitutional frenzy, the principal inhabitants were extremely liberal in their entertainments, as well as in their ideas ; were

fond of bull-fights, dancing, singing, *ponch y nuevos*,* and even, because it was English, of bottled porter. But a sad change afterwards came over them. These festive meetings were, on the return of absolutism, deemed vulgar, democratical, and *illegitimate*; and a more dull and gloomy city than Malaga, after the star of liberty had set, can hardly be imagined. I speak, of course, of the Spanish portion of the inhabitants only. The foreign merchants of the place have at all times been, and still continue to be, noted for hospitality.

Most of the leading men of the city have country houses, to which they retire with their families during the heat of summer. One of the most delightful of these *sin cuidados*,† is “*El Retiro de San Tomas*, situated at the foot of the mountain range that bounds the vale of Malaga to the west, and distant about eight miles from the city. This charming retreat is said to occupy the site of a villa built by one of the Moslem sovereigns of Malaga, and destroyed by the Spaniards in one of the devastating inroads made upon the fertile valley of the Guadaljorce, in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. The present edifice, erected shortly after the kingdom of Granada was annexed to the crown of Spain, was also a royal seat, and so continued to be until the time of Philip V.,

* Punch and eggs.

† Without cares.

who bestowed it upon an illegitimate son, then bishop of the diocese; from whom, he being of the order of San Domingo, it received its present name, *El Retiro de San Tomas*. At his death it went to the Dominican convent, of which he was a member, but has since passed into other hands, and, at the period of which I write, was occupied by Mr. Roose, the consul-general of Prussia, who, in favour of a letter of introduction with which I had been furnished, gave my friends and self a most courteous reception.

The *Retiro* is celebrated for the rare productions and luxuriance of its gardens, the fragrance of its orange and citron groves, the splendour of its *jets d'eau*, and the beauty of the scenery it commands in all directions.

After seeing all the external sights of the place, we were introduced to one of a much more novel character in Spain, viz., a large circle of ladies, assembled round a steaming urn, in the fragrant enjoyment of a "cup of tea." We needed but little pressing to join in the imbibition of the refreshing beverage, at all times acceptable, but especially in this country, where, excepting in an apothecary's shop, the cherished leaves of the invaluable shrub are seldom to be seen. From the *salon* we were conducted to a secluded part of the grounds, where another agreeable surprise awaited us,

the peasantry of the neighbourhood, decked out in their holiday suits, having been assembled there, to do honour to the patron saint of the village, by belabouring the *gazon vert* with an interminable *fandango*.

The natives of the south of Spain are passionately fond of this dance, which, like a Scotch reel, is usually kept up as long as fingers or lungs can be found to mark time for the exhibitors. A few notes thrummed on the guitar are quite sufficient to set a *fandango* on foot; or, in default of that instrument, a monotonous ditty chaunted by one of the bystanders answers the purpose.

Sometimes, when the vocalist is a *gracioso*,* his part of the performance is by far the most entertaining, as he will improvise couplets on the various gymnasts, who, from time to time, relieve each other at the laborious amusement, seasoning his verses plentifully with Andalusian wit.

This dance is certainly of Oriental parentage. It is the same, in fact, as that of the Ghawazies of Egypt, but clothed with *South of Europe* decency. The balancing movements of the arms are precisely the same in both, and the contortions of the body differ but slightly, though the Spanish dancers have more regard for decorum than the tattooed-faced jezebels of

* *Buffo*.

the East. In the Fandango also, the co-operation of the feet is at times much more active, affording a wide field for the display of personal activity, if offering but small opportunity for the exhibition of grace. In the end it becomes a most fatiguing affair, either to witness or take part in ; and no one, without personal experience, can form an idea of the serious engagement he enters into, by inviting a fair *Malgueña* to stand up to *un poquito de Fandango* ; the *Caballero* exposing himself to much *bardrage* should he be forced to give in before the lady.

The *Cachuca* is a refined species of *Fandango* ; but it is seldom witnessed in Spain, except on the stage. It is doubtless a very graceful dance, but, as performed in its native land, *tant soit peu libre*.

CHAPTER X.

CHOICE OF ROUTES BETWEEN MALAGA AND GRANADA—ROAD TO VELEZ MALAGA—OBSERVATIONS ON THAT TOWN—CONTINUATION OF JOURNEY TO GRANADA—FERTILE VALLEY OF THE RIVER VELEZ—VENTA OF ALCAUCIN—ZAFARAYA MOUNTAINS—ALHAMA—DESCRIPTION OF THAT PLACE AND OF ITS THERMAL BATHS—CACIN—VENTA OF HUELMA—SALT-PANS OF LA MALA—FIRST VIEW OF GRANADA AND ITS VEGA—SITUATION OF THE CITY—ITS SALUBRITY—ANCIENT NAMES—BECOMES THE CAPITAL OF THE LAST MOSLEM KINGDOM OF SPAIN—FINE APPROACH TO THE MODERN CITY—IT IS THE MOST PURELY MOORISH TOWN IN SPAIN—CAUSE OF THE DECADENCE OF THE ARTS UNDER THE MOORS OF GRANADA, AND OF THE EASY CONQUEST OF THE CITY—DESTRUCTION OF THE MOORISH LITERATURE ON THE CAPTURE OF THE CITY BY THE SPANIARDS.

SEVERAL roads present themselves between Malaga and Granada, each (as the Dover-packet skippers of the olden time were wont to say of their vessels) possessing a peculiar claim to the traveller's preference.

One is good, but very long; another is short, but very bad; a third is both circuitous and bad, but across a most interesting and picturesque country. We made choice of this last,

which proceeds by way of Velez, Malaga, and Alhama.

Of the other two above-mentioned, the first is an excellent carriage road, that is directed in the first instance upon Loxa, and will be travelled over hereafter; the second (a mere mountain track) leaves the coast at once, and proceeds straight to Alhama.

The distance from Malaga to Velez, although reckoned six leagues of Spain, is only about eighteen English miles. For the greater part of the way, the road is conducted along the Mediterranean shore; sometimes ascending and crossing the low, rocky promontories by which the coast is indented, but seldom stretching inland more than a quarter of a mile. It is tolerably well kept, and is at all seasons passable for carriages.

The coast is rugged, and thickly set with towers and *casa fuertes*,* but is marked by no picturesque features until arrived within a short distance of Velez, when the road, turning away from the sea-shore, enters a flat and verdant valley, wherein stands the old town, shrouded in groves of orange and lemon trees, and backed by hills, clad to their summits with vines. A fine stream, bearing the same name as the town, serpentines through the valley,

* Literally, *strong houses*. They are brick forts of small dimensions, presenting, generally, a bastioned front on the land side, and a semi-circular battery, en barbette, to the sea.

fertilizing it by a deposit of rich soil, swept from the sides of the Sierras of Loxa and Alhama. A kind of delta has thus been formed at the river's mouth, stretching some way into the sea ; so that Velez, which probably, in former days, stood upon or near the coast, is now upwards of three miles from it.

The town is slightly elevated above and on the left bank of the stream, and is commanded by the neighbouring hills. The streets are wide, clean, and well paved ; but the thriving commerce, and abundant market, naturally looked for in a place once so noted for the productiveness of its orchards and extent of its export trade, are no longer to be seen ; and the number of inhabitants has either decreased very rapidly, or has been greatly exaggerated of late years, when stated to amount to twelve thousand souls.

There can be little doubt but that Velez is the town of Menoba, mentioned both by Pliny and in the Itinerary of Antonius, though there is a slight discrepancy in the two accounts ; for, whilst both place Menoba to the eastward of Malaca, the latter states the distance between the two places to be only twelve Roman miles, and the former says it is on a *river*. Now, there is no stream that can be called a " river " between the two towns, excepting that of Velez itself, and it is full eighteen *Roman* miles from Malaga.

In the days of the Moslems, Velez was a place of considerable strength, as well as commercial importance, and only fell into the hands of the Spaniards in the spring of the same year that the “catholic kings” possessed themselves of Malaga, A.D., 1487.

The investment of the fortress was attended with much risk to the army of Ferdinand, which at one period of the siege was cut off from its communications with the interior. The king himself also—for he personally directed the operations against the beleaguered city—incurred great danger in repulsing an attempt made by the Moors to relieve the place; his life having been saved only by the devotedness of his attendants. The armorial bearings of the town commemorate this event.

We had been informed that the only thing for which Velez Malaga is at the present day celebrated, is its breed of *fleas*; and certainly we could not in this instance say, “*nunquam ad liquidum fama perducitur*;” for never in my life—and one retains a lively recollection of these matters—did I see a more active, nor feed a more insatiable race than that which is perpetuated in the floors, walls, and bedding, of the *Venta Nueva*. The camphor bags, with which, at the recommendation of our Malaga friends, we had come provided, were thrown away as useless.

Nothing loth, we started for Alhama with the earliest day. The road ascends very gradually along a fine, open, and highly cultivated valley, all the way to the venta of Vinuela, distant about eight miles from Velez. For the first few miles the road is good, but afterwards it is so cut across by water channels as to offer serious impediments to quick travelling; for these aqueducts are formed by high banks, composed of mud and fascines, which, though bridged across and kept in good repair during the winter season, when the mountain torrents come down with great force, yet in summer are suffered to get out of order, and must, therefore, be scrambled over as the traveller best can.

The valley is admirably irrigated, however, from other sources, and the crops it produces are remarkably fine and very various. They consist of fruits and vegetables of all sorts, maize, corn, and sugar-canies. On the right hand, but at some distance, rises the lofty *Sierra de Tejeda*; on the left are visible the rugged peaks of the mountains of Antequera; whilst in front, the road continues to be directed towards the elevated passes of Zafaraya, which serrate the great mountain-chain of Alhama.

About four miles beyond the venta of Vinuela—that is, twelve miles from Velez, and half way between it and Alhama—is the venta of Al-

caucin.* Beyond this the ascent becomes much steeper, and the road, reaching the summit of the mountain range, enters a narrow and difficult pass, that soon shuts out the view of the sea. In exchange, however, it opens to the north, into a lovely and singularly secluded valley, which is walled in on all sides by barren and rugged tors, and carpeted with the richest vegetation; and, proceeding a short distance onwards, we were yet further gratified by obtaining an imposing view of the famed *Sierra Nevada*.

The road from hence is tolerably good nearly all the way to Alhama, which is not seen until one arrives immediately *over* it. The descent is abrupt and bad.

Alhama stands on the brink of a stupendous *tajo*, or fissure, through which the river *Marchan* forces its way towards the great plain of Granada. Encompassed on all sides by wild, impracticable sierras, it commands the only tolerable road that, for the distance of nearly forty miles, presents itself to traverse the lofty mountain spine, which stretches east and west, along the Mediterranean shore; that is to say, the portion of this chain which extends between the pass of Alfarnate—where the great road from Malaga to Loja crosses it; and the sources of the river

* The *village* of Alcaucin, erroneously placed in Lopez' and other maps *on* the road, is situated about half a mile from it, on the right hand.

Durcal—round which winds the road from Almuñecar to Granada.

From this circumstance, the Moors ever regarded this mountain fortress as a place of first-rate importance, calling it, indeed, the key of Granada; and it was not without reason they did so, since the fall, first of Malaga, and then of their beloved city itself, was mainly attributable to the capture of this place, by Don Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, who took it by surprise, A.D., 1481.

Even in the present day, it is a formidable port; but artillery has now been brought to such perfection, and is made to traverse such difficult country, that its defenders would soon be buried beneath its ruins.

Alhama seems to occupy the site of the Roman town of Artigi, mentioned by Pliny as one of the cities lying inland between the upper Guadalquivir and the Mediterranean Sea. But no vestiges of walls of greater antiquity than the time of the Moors are any where visible. Its present name is evidently derived from the Arabic, *Al Hamman* (the Bath).

Besides the fame enjoyed by Alhama, from its bygone strength and strategical importance—its numerous sieges and obstinate defences—the place is in high repute from the curative properties of its thermal springs; and it derives yet further celebrity from the various laurel

wreaths twined round it by the poets and romancers of all ages. The translation of one of its plaintive legends has not been thought unworthy even of the pen of Byron.*

Divest Alhama, however, of its historical recollections, of its hot water, its poetry, and romance, and it is one of the dullest, dirtiest, and most sultry towns of southern Spain. The streets are narrow, houses poor, and churches and convents dilapidated.

It is supplied with water by means of an aqueduct, and the stream is sufficiently abundant to keep it clean and sweet, but for some filthy dyers; who first turn it to their own purpose, and then into the public streets. Although so little ground in the vicinity of Alhama is susceptible of cultivation, and the place contains but a few inconsiderable manufactories of woollen clothes, yet the population is said to amount to 10,000 souls. I have great doubts, however, whether it would not be over-rated at half that number.

In the bottom of the fissure—which is 600 feet below the town—are numerous picturesque water-mills; and, viewed from thence, Alhama furnishes an excellent subject for the painter: The situation of the crumbling old fortress is romantic; the sides of the hills rising behind it are clad with vines, and their summits clothed

* Woe is me, Alhama!

with forest trees ; whilst beyond are seen the distant peaks of the Zafaraya passes.

The hot springs are about a mile from the town, on the left of the road leading to Granada. The source which supplies the baths is very copious, and its heat is about 110° of Fahrenheit. The water contains various salts and a considerable quantity of sulphur, smells rather offensively, and certainly does *not* taste like chicken-broth, as some people maintain that of Wiesbaden does ; though, for my own part, I confess I never could discover any chicken flavour in the scalding liquid of the fashionable *koch brunnen*, unless it was of the eggs, from which, after three weeks' incubation, the chickens had not been released.

The mineral water of Alhama has been found very efficacious in obstinate cases of rheumatism, dyspepsia, and hypochondriasis, and is considered infallible in the cure of gun-shot wounds. Its virtues were doubtless known to the Romans ; indeed, one of the baths is said (and appears) to be, the work of that people. But the vaulted building which now encloses the principal source is evidently of Moorish workmanship. The reservoir, or bath, that first receives the beneficent stream, is built at the foot of a scarped rock, from a narrow crevice in the face of which the streaming water gushes, whilst the base of the same rock is washed by the icy-cold current of the Marchan.

After visiting the baths, we returned to Alhama to pass the night—to sleep I cannot say, since not an eye could any one of the party close, during the half dozen tedious hours that, stretched on our cloaks, (having very soon been driven from the wool-stuffed mattresses afforded by the house) we lay alternately invoking Morphæus and Phœbus, and exclaiming, “Woe is me, Alhama !

We left the wretched *venta* as soon as the light was sufficient to enable us to follow the winding road down the steep side of the mountain, and, reaching once more the bed of the Marchan, crossed to its right bank, and took the road to Granada, by way of La Mala.

In about two hours we passed within gunshot of the village of Cacin, leaving it on our left; and then, fording a stream of the same name which runs towards the village, proceeded, by a villainously stony road, over a very broken, but not mountainous country, to the solitary *venta* of Huelma, which, though distant only about fifteen miles from Alhama, took us four hours and a half to reach.

We were glad, and at the same time surprised, to find that the house, miserable as its exterior bespoke it, could furnish materials for a human breakfast, as well as a feed of barley for our famished horses; an invigorator which the *mozo* of the posada at Alhama had certainly forgotten to give the poor animals at cock-crow, according to his plighted word.

From the venta of Huelma to La Mala is six miles of very bad road, and very uninteresting country. La Mala contains a royal salt manufactory, and appears to be a thriving village. The water from which the salt is extracted is pumped up from wells sunk in all directions round the place, and is conducted by pipes and channels into extensive pans, where, exposed to the action of the sun and air, the process of evaporation is soon completed.

All the hills in the vicinity contain so much salt, that even the little stream which runs through the village, and supplies its inhabitants with this necessary of life, is strongly impregnated with it, and it is difficult to procure drinkable water any where in the neighbourhood.

About two miles beyond La Mala (the road having reached the summit of a hill of some height), the far-famed city, and its glorious *vega*—which we had all the morning been looking for on gaining each succeeding eminence—at length burst upon our impatient sight. It is a magnificent view; though the city is at too great a distance (full seven miles) to be a striking object in a prospect of such vast extent; and the unvarying olive-green tint of the plain, and the total want of (perceptible) water, give a sameness to the scene that somewhat disappointed us. The mountains, too, that rise to

the northward of the Genil, dividing that river from the Guadalquivir, appeared tamely outlined, after those we had so lately traversed.

On a nearer approach, however, Granada has an imposing appearance. Its elevated citadels, hanging gardens, and wooded hills, form a fine background to the shining city ; and the splendid Sierra Nevada, which is now again seen on the right, makes the picture almost perfect.

The descent is very gradual towards Gavia el Grande, which stands on the edge of the plain—the road from thence to Granada being on a perfect level. The luxuriance of the vegetation exceeds any thing I ever beheld. The wheat, though not yet ready for the sickle, was upwards of seven feet high, and the crops of flax, clover, &c. were gigantic in proportion.

The whole plain, as we rode along, appeared to be one vast cultivated field ; and the want of water we had complained of, in looking down upon the *vega*, was readily accounted for on observing the innumerable irrigating channels into which the Genil and its various affluents are directed, and in the distribution of which, the most rigid frugality is perceptible. The plain is all watered “ by the foot,” as practised in the East.

The city of Granada is situated at the eastern extremity of the celebrated *vega*, where the golden Darro and the crystal Genil — long

pent in amongst the tortuous ravines of the *Sierra Nevada* — first pour their fertilizing streams of melted snow upon the verdant plain.

The greater part of the city stands within the fork of the two rivers, sheltered to the southward and eastward by the *Cerro de Santa Elena* — a rugged hill, crowned by the lofty towers of the Alhambra — and connected by several bridges with the other portion of the city, which extends along the right bank of the Darro. This quarter, or *Barrio*, still retains its ancient Moorish appellation, *Albaycin*, and is screened to the north by a steep ridge, once crowned by another formidable castle, but of which the ruined foundations alone remain to attest its strength and magnitude.

Granada, whilst thus sheltered on three sides from the piercing blasts that in winter sweep over the snowy summits of the *Sierra Nevada*, is yet sufficiently elevated to command an extensive view over the fertile *vega*, stretching far away to the west, and to receive the refreshing breezes wafted from its perfumed orange groves. The climate, consequently, is at all seasons delightful, and the shade of its ever-verdant groves, and freshness of its inexhaustible springs, might well be regretted by the sensual Moslems, driven from it to seek a shelter on the parched shores of Africa.

The coins, monuments, inscriptions, and sta-

tues which have been discovered here, leave no doubt that the Roman city of *Illiberris* stood upon or near the site of the present city; though some antiquaries have imagined they discovered in the name of the Sierra *Elvira* that of the ancient city.

The word *Elvira*, however, is merely a corruption of the Arabic words *Al Beyrah* — the unprofitable — which is quite the character of the droughty arid mountain in question; and as not a vestige of a town is to be met with in its vicinity, it may fairly be concluded that so unlikely a site was never selected for one.

Pliny calls the city “*Iliberi, which is also Liberini;*” the latter name being apparently formed from that which it bore previously to the arrival of the Romans in the country, namely, *Liberia*, a city founded, according to the Spanish chronologists, 2000 years before the Christian era. By the Goths the name was changed to *Eliberi*, as proved by numerous coins of that people, yet extant. The last of these bears the date A.D., 636, from which it may be inferred that the place had fallen to decay prior to the irruption of the Saracens; particularly as little notice is taken of it in the early annals of the Moors of Spain, under its new name of *Granada*.

Florez conjectures — and I think not unreasonably — that the name *Granada* may be derived from the Arabic words *Garb*, west; and

nata, the name of a mountain overlooking the city of Damascus, from whence came the band of Arabs that conquered Eliberi. Thus, we may suppose, that on first discovering it from the Sierra of Alhama, they designated it, from a resemblance to the bright city and its splendid vale in their native land, the western *Nata*.

The surpassing beauty of the wooded eminences overhanging the Darro and Genil, not less than the delightful temperature and excessive fertility of the outstretched *vega*, could not fail to have soon induced many of such earthly paradise-seekers as the Mohammedans to settle there; and doubtless, Granada, at an early date after the Saracenic conquest, again became a large and populous city; though not until the power of the crescent was on the wane; in fact, not until Cordoba and Valencia had fallen to the Christians, and Seville was threatened with destruction, did she assume a proud pre-eminence, by becoming the capital of the diminished, though scarcely weakened, dominions of Mohammedan Spain.

The first great augmentation the city had received was occasioned by the capture of the towns of Alhambra and Baeza, by Ferdinand III, (A. D. 1224) the inhabitants of which, driven to the southern side of the Guadalquivír, sought shelter behind the rugged mountains of Jaen, establishing themselves at Granada. The

exiles of the former town there built a fortress, overhanging the left bank of the Darro, to which they gave the name of their regretted home; whilst those of the latter erected an equally formidable citadel on the opposite side of the river, which was called after them Al Bayzin, and eventually gave its name to the large and populous district of the city that, in the course of a few years, was clustered round its base.

The city, thus strengthened and augmented, was shortly afterwards (A. D. 1236) selected as the capital of a new kingdom, founded by Mohammed Abou Said, or, as from the name of his family he is generally called, Mohammed Alhamar;* and the throne continued in the family of that prince until A. D. 1492, when Ferdinand and Isabella planted the cross upon the towers of the Alhambra; a period of upwards of two centuries and a half.

The new kingdom erected by Mohammed Alhamar might have presented as impassable a barrier to the Christian arms as Turkey has offered, from the conquest of Constantinople to

* The accounts of the founder of the kingdom of Granada differ materially.—Florez says that he was but a common ploughman, and that the surname of Alhamar was given him from his ruddy complexion.—Others, however, (and I think with greater appearance of truth,) maintain that he was a distinguished inhabitant of *Arjona*, of which place he made himself Lord previous to founding the kingdom of Granada, and that he belonged to the tribe of Alhamars, from Couffa, on the Red Sea.

the present day, had not anarchy and dissension pervaded the other provinces of the Spanish peninsula, yet subject to the Moslems. But, jealous of each other, and differing in their views, they fell successively before the two enterprising sovereigns who, at that period, occupied the thrones of Castile and Aragon. Thus Cordoba, which had already ceded the pre-eminence to Seville, fell, unaided, into the hands of the Castilian in the very year that Granada became the capital of a formidable Mohammedan kingdom; and Valencia, only two years later, was also finally added to the conquests of the Christians. Even the city of Jaen, though fiercely contested for by Mohammed Alhamar, was at last ceded by treaty to his better-supported antagonist, *San Fernando*, who then, with consummate policy, forming an alliance with the king of Granada, induced him to assist in the subjugation of Seville.

This important city, which, a short time previously, had adopted a Republican form of government, and, with democratic jealousy, had kept aloof whilst the Christians were crippling the growing power of the neighbouring kingdom of Granada, now reaped the fruits of its short-sighted policy; being obliged, after a short but obstinate struggle, to bend the neck to the Castilian yoke.

Murcia on one side, and Algarbe on the other,

were soon afterwards added to the conquests of the allied sovereigns of Castile and Aragon. So that, before the first monarch of Granada had closed his reign, all the Mohammedan states and cities, which had repudiated his alliance, fell in detail to the Christian arms.

The kingdom of Mohammed Alhamar, which thenceforth had to contend single-handed against the Christians, was respectable in size, though but a fragment of the vast dominions of the Caliphs of the West. It extended far beyond the limits of the modern kingdom of Granada, and comprised all the mountainous portions of those of Jaen, Cordoba, Seville, and Murcia; thus stretching along the sea-shore from Cape Trafalgar to Cape de Gatte, and forming a compact and very defensible territory.

Its population, too, was great beyond all proportion to its extent; the inhabitants of the various cities captured by the Christians having, by an inconceivable act of barbarity and impolicy, been driven from their homes to seek shelter within the mountain-girt kingdom of Granada. So enormous, indeed, is the amount of population said to have been, that the Capital alone could furnish an army of 50,000 fighting men.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Moors, thus concentrated, should have been able to maintain their independence for so extended a

period ; especially, when we consider the want of unanimity that prevailed amongst the Christian princes, from the death of St. Ferdinand until the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon, in the persons of Ferdinand V. and Isabella.

The city still covers a considerable extent of ground, though certainly far less than it must have occupied when swarming with half a million Mohammedans. The approach to it, on the Malaga side, is particularly fine ; a handsome stone bridge (built by the French during their occupation of the province in the “ war of independence ”) spans the sparkling Genil — the *Singilis* of the Romans. Immediately beyond this bridge rise crenated walls, and terraced gardens, domes, minarets, and shining steeples, reaching to the base of the dark rocks that bear the yet darker towers of the proud Alhambra.

The precincts of the city gained, every thing bears the marks of Moslem hands. The narrow streets and gushing fountains, the lofty, flat-roofed houses, and heavy projecting balconies, are all quite oriental ; whilst, here and there, the entrance of some old mosque, or ruined bath, bears, in its horse-shoe arch, the peculiar stamp of the Morisco.

Granada may certainly lay claim to the title of the *most Moorish* city of Spain. Some few, whose glories had passed away ere it rose to

distinction, may have surpassed it in wealth, extent, and even population ; and others were doubtless more distinguished for the cultivation of those arts and sciences which were cherished with such peculiar care by the Arabian conquerors of Spain. But, when the Moslem rule was drawing towards its close, and Granada had to contend alone with the Christians for existence, her monarchs, in their distress, naturally turned for help to their uncivilized brethren of Mauritania ; and, as each fresh graft was taken from the original savage stock, the character of the people of Granada became more decidedly Moorish ; until, at last, from the frequency of these calls, they came to differ but little from the wild nomad tribes, whose assistance they had invoked.

At its commencement, however, the new kingdom founded on the ruins of Cordoba, Seville, and Valencia, gave promise of reviving the brilliant days of the early Mohammedans — its sovereigns of rivalling the fame of the Abdalrahmans and Almanzors. The countless minarets of the renovated city selected for its capital resounded with the *Muezzeem's* cries, awakening the dozing fanaticism of “the faithful ;” and the bright watch-tower* of its proud Alhambra served as a beacon to point out where what remained of wealth and learning, in the

* *Torre de la Vela*—the loftiest tower of the Alhambra.

wreck of Musa's mighty empire, would find a safe place of refuge. But the crimes which soon soiled the throne of Alhamar, the fierce contentions of the Princes of the Royal house, and the interminable civil wars to which their pretensions led, so exhausted Granada's strength, that, stripped one by one of her bulwarks, cut off from external succour, and torn by intestine dissension, she at length fell an easy prey to her persevering enemies ; and, at her fall, expired the flickering light of Mohammedan civilization ;—a civilization, which, considering the withering tendency of the Arabian impostor's scheme of religion, furnishes much greater cause for surprise, than even the rapid propagation and wide spread of the pernicious creed itself.

The decadence of the arts kept pace with that in the manners of the inhabitants of this fair region ;—both being natural consequences of the internal struggles by which it was agitated. The olive tree could not thrive in soil moistened only with the blood of its cultivators.

During this period of progressive deterioration were erected most of the Moslem buildings, whose remains are yet scattered throughout the city ; and, whilst in some points of character these monuments exhibit a marked difference from the Arabian structures of the East, they are more purely *Moorish* than any other Sar-

cenic edifices to be met with in Spain, and are infinitely superior, in every respect, to such as were erected in Barbary at a yet more recent date.

The literature of the Moors of Spain would doubtless have exhibited a similar decadence and peculiarity of character; but on these points we have not the means of judging, the fanatic destroyer of the celebrated library of the Ptolemies having, seven centuries afterwards, found an unworthy imitator in Cardinal Ximenes—at whose instigation every scrap of Mohammedan literature found within the captured city of Granada was, with intolerant fury, committed to the flames.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ALHAMBRA AND GENERALIFE—OTHER RELIQUES OF THE MOORS
CONTAINED WITHIN THE CITY—THE CATHEDRAL OF GRANADA—
CHAPEL OF THE CATHOLIC KINGS—ANTIQUITY OF THE CHURCH OF
ELIBERI—TOMB OF GONZALVO DE CORDOBA—CHURCHES OF SAN
JUAN DE DIOS AND SAN DOMINGO—CARTHUSIAN CONVENT—HER-
MITA DE SAN ANTON.

THE famed Alhambra* was the first object to which we bent our steps, after depositing our effects at the *Fonda del Comercio*, and sending our horses to the *Posada de las Tablas*. It is perched on the summit of a steep but narrow ridge, which, falling precipitously to the north, along the left bank of the Darro, terminates in a rugged point, overhanging the city, to the west; and, as I have already noticed, is supposed to have been erected by the exiled inhabitants of a town of the same name in La Mancha, captured by *San Fernando* about the year of our Lord 1224.

The walls of the fortress follow the various

* Al Hamara—the red.

sinuosities of the scarped cliffs that bound the rocky ledge on three sides, and enclose a plateau, 770 yards in length, and 200 wide in its greatest breadth. But the form of the *enceinte* is very irregular, and its ground plan bears a strong resemblance to the elongated leaf of the prickly pear ; the numerous towers studding the walls of the Moorish stronghold having all the appearance of the *inattackable* fruit that grows round the edge of the Spanish vegetable monster. The principal entrance is by the gate of judgment, situated in one of the towers on the southern front of the fortress. The approach to this gate is by a wide and well kept carriage road, which, shadowed over by luxuriant forest trees, winds up a narrow ravine, that, on this side, divides the Alhambra hill from another steep mound, which projects, in like manner, towards the city, and is occupied by the ruins of other old Moorish fortifications, called *Las Torres bermejas*. Both hills form part of the *Cerro de Santa Elena*.

On gaining the interior of the fortress, the first object that catches the eye, standing towards the centre of the plateau, and looking somewhat contemptuously down upon its Moorish rival, is the gorgeous palace of the Emperor Charles V. It is a large quadrangular building, enclosing a spacious circular court, and its four fronts, constructed entirely of cut stone,

have a handsome appearance, albeit, the heterogeneous mixture of the orders of architecture they exhibit, is of rather questionable taste.

Though of so much more recent date than the palace of the Moorish kings, the stately pile of Spain's mighty monarch seems doomed, like the throne of his successors, to fall to the ground e'en sooner than the tottering fabric of Mohammedanism itself. Indeed it is even now a mere shell, and the few remaining bolts and bars that hold together its shattered walls will, I have no doubt, shortly find their way to the same furnace that has already converted the bronze rings and ornaments with which it was formerly embellished, into the more useful form of *maravedis*.*

The celebrated palace of the Moslem princes, to which our conductor now led the way, was commenced by Mohammed Al Fakir, son of Mohammed Abou Said, the founder of the kingdom of Granada, A.D. 1275. It rests against the north wall of the fortress, and its low and irregular brick walls, overshadowed by the stone palace of the Spanish kings on one side, and by the huge tower of Comares on another, have a mean and very unpromising appearance. It looks like the dilapidated stables and *remises* attached to a French chateau of the "old school," the walls of which only have withstood the levelling system of the revolution.

* A small Spanish coin.

This unpretending exterior being common to all Moorish buildings, did not occasion disappointment. Not so, however, the interior ; of which, for I was a young traveller then, I had conceived a much more exalted idea. Indeed, the disappointment was general, for all of us had expected to see, if not a palace on a grand scale and of magnificent proportions, one, at all events, containing suites of courts and apartments, which, on the score of costliness and luxury, would not cede the palm to any erected even in these days of refinement and extravagance. When, therefore, after following our guide through several long dirty passages, we were ushered into a small quadrangular court, laid out like a Dutch garden, but, unlike it, overgrown with sunflowers, larkspurs, and marigolds, so little idea had we of being within the precincts of the royal apartments, that my companions were about to pass on with eager haste, until I called out, " Do stop a moment to look at this, it is so *pretty*. " *"Este es el patio de los Leones,"** said our cicerone, describing a wide circle with his stick, to draw our attention to the light and elegant colonnade that encompassed us, adding, after a short but effective pause, and pointing at the same time to a basin in the centre of the court, supported on the backs of twelve nondescript animals which

* This is the court of the Lions.

were half concealed in the flowery jungle, “and those are the *lions*, celebrated in every part of the known world, which have given the name to this terrestrial paradise!” This grandiloquent burst was evidently occasioned by our apparent *insoussiance*. We stood corrected, but not the less disappointed.

On paper — in type as well as in pencil — the Alhambra has generally been represented in too glowing colours. In defence of the painter it may be said that he labours under a peculiar disadvantage, as far as *truth* is concerned ; for, whilst the utmost effort of his art will never enable him to do justice to the lovely tints of nature, he cannot, with all his skill, avoid conveying too favourable an idea of works of art, especially in delineating architectural subjects. It follows, that, in drawings of the building now before us, the elaborately ornamented walls, the delicately wrought arcades, the spouting lions, the flowery parterres, every thing, in fact, connected with it, appears fresh, perfect, and beautiful ; the dirt, weeds, cobwebs, and scribbling that disfigure the *reality*, being omitted as unnecessary adjuncts to the *picture* ; and the palace is thus represented to us (embellished a little, perhaps, according to the artist’s fancy) rather such as it *may have been* in the days of the Moors, than what it *is* at the present time ; — this leads to one source of dis-

appointment. On the other hand, whilst travellers have given the dimensions of the various courts and apartments with tolerable accuracy, they certainly have misapplied their epithets in describing them. The *reader* is apt, therefore, to lose sight of the scale in picturing to himself these gorgeous halls, which the *spectator*, at the first glance, *sees* are neither grand nor magnificent.

We, at all events, having, from what we had previously read and seen, formed most erroneous conceptions, both as to the size of the building, and of its state of preservation, made the circuit of, and quitted the too celebrated palace, disappointed with every thing within its walls.

The false impression once removed, however, and a few days given to mourn over the sad destruction of our long cherished fancies, we again ascended the wall-girt hill ; and, having now brought our visual rays to bear at a proper focus, and allowed greater scope to the imagination—in other words, changing the adjectives grand and magnificent for tasteful and elaborate, and, in some matters, suffering fancy to supply the place of reality—we received much greater pleasure from our second visit to the crumbling pile ; a gratification that became less alloyed at each succeeding visit.

I should here observe that, at the period of

which I write, A.D. 1822, the Alhambra, like every thing else in Spain at that epoch, was in a deplorable state of dilapidation. No steps had yet been taken to repair the damage done by the French on evacuating the fortress ten years previously; and the Royal Palace, rent and shaken by the same explosions that had thrown down the towers of the Moorish stronghold, was still strewed with ruins, partially unroofed, and exposed to the destructive influence of wind and rain. That it is yet standing we have to thank General Sebastiani, who was governor of the province during a considerable part of the late war, and bestowed great pains upon its preservation. Perhaps, indeed, but for his interference, as well as the repairs he caused to be executed, this *chef d'œuvre* of Moorish art would have shared the fate of the walls of the fortress.

I am happy, for the sake of future travellers, to be able to add that, on visiting Granada many years after, I found the Alhambra in a much improved state, notwithstanding that it had in the meanwhile suffered severely from the shock of an earthquake. The government seemed at length to have decided that the Royal Palace was worthy of preservation, though the work of infidels. An officer of rank had accordingly been appointed to its guardianship, whose permission it was requisite to obtain ere

the stranger could enter its gates; and an old woman was lodged therein as his deputy, to pocket the fees and do the honours.

Under the watchful eye and ever busy broom of this vigilant personage, the place is now kept in excellent "*inspection order*." The white marble pillars of its corridors have, under the influence of soap and water and a scrubbing brush, been cleansed of the names, doggrel verses, and maudlin sentiment, with which, from time immemorial, travellers have thought proper to disfigure them; the rubbish of another description that concealed its mosaic pavements has been removed; the weeds with which its courts were overgrown are eradicated; and, in the words of an Arabian poet, "The spider is no longer the chamberlain at the gate of Koshrew."

Still, however, even in its improved condition, the future visitor must not go prepared to walk through stately courts and suites of magnificent apartments, else, like me, will he be sadly disappointed. The novelty in the style of architecture, the delicacy and variety of its enrichments, the tasteful patterns of its tessellated floors, and the laboured workmanship of its vaulted ceilings, constitute its chief merits, and are, I willingly admit, masterpieces of their respective kinds.

These have been so well and minutely de-

scribed in Murphy's work on the Moorish antiquities of Spain, that I shall confine my observations on the Royal Palace to the state in which I found it at the period of my last visit, in the autumn of 1833.

The female Cicero who, as aforesaid, was then charged with the exhibition of "the Lions," happened to be one of those mechanical, dogmatical persons, who not only dislike, above all things, to leave the beaten track, but will insist upon regulating all tastes by their own. Finding, therefore, that she had laid down a "grand tour" of the premises from which nothing could persuade her to deviate, and had determined in her own mind the precise number of minutes that should be devoted to the admiration of each object, we requested she would save herself further trouble, and us annoyance, by leaving us to the guidance of *Mateo Ximenes* (a name rendered classic by the pen of Washington Irving), who, as a kind of Director General of English travellers in Granada, had attached himself to us in the capacity of *fac totum*.

Mateo being now, from the emoluments of his self-created appointment, one of the inhabitants *de mas tomo** of the Alhambra; from his eloquent dissertations and learned disquisitions, an acknowledged dilettante and antiquary;

* Of most *volume*—meaning importance.

and, as the “Minister of Grace and Justice” of most visitors, a person of considerable influence with the deputy governor of the palace, our conductress, on payment of certain dues, made not the least scruple of acceding to our proposal, giving Mateo, nevertheless, strict injunctions to have us constantly in sight, and to keep our hands from picking and stealing.

For our future visits we obtained a written permission from the commandant to make sketches, in virtue of which we were enabled to wander about wherever and as long as we pleased ; a privilege which I would recommend all travellers to obtain immediately on their arrival at Granada, for, besides that this permit saves both trouble and expense, they will find no more delightful retreat during the heat of the day, than within the shaded courts and cool and airy halls of the Moorish palace.

The *Patio de la Alberca*, to which, following the Itinerary laid down by the *Tia Manuela*, I will first conduct my readers, is an oblong court, ornamented at the two ends with light colonnades, and having a long pool of water, or tank (*Al Borkat*, whence its name is derived), in the centre. Above, but a little retired from the northern arcade, the huge square tower of Comares rises to the height of 142 feet ; and in it, on the level of and communicating with the court, is the grand hall of audience of the am-

bassador's. This, however, being the principal show-room of the palace, I will, following the discreet example of our guide, keep in reserve, and proceed to the Hall of the Baths, into which a passage leads from the eastern side of the *Patio de la Alberca*.

Art seems to have exhausted itself in the embellishment and fitting up of this luxurious establishment. Its floors are laid with a mosaic of porcelain. Its walls, faced also with glazed tiles to a certain height, are finished upwards with the most elaborate moresques, moulded in stucco to correspond with the basement. The roof of the royal bathing apartment is arched with solid blocks of stone, bidding defiance to the sun's rays, and is pierced with numerous starry apertures, admitting ventilation. The basins wherein the royal couple performed their ablutions are of white marble, and placed in separate alcoves, at the north end of the principal saloon. The windows open upon a garden without the palace walls, conveying perfumed breezes from its fragrant shrubs and orange trees to the epicurean bathers within.

Another apartment, communicating with the saloon of the royal baths, is called a *concert* room. Music room would, perhaps, be a more correct name for it, since I think it may be fairly doubted whether the Arabs ever cultivated music to such an extent as to warrant

our using the term *concert* in speaking of it. Numerous Arabic ballads, some of considerable merit, have, it is true, been handed down to the present generation, and are yet chaunted by public singers in the east, but without the slightest attempt to attune either their voices or the instruments on which they sometimes strike an accompaniment.

The natives of Morocco, on the other hand, who may be considered as the "nearest of kin" to the Moors of Spain, have not the slightest notion of *music*. A diabolical noise, made by a *zambomba** and a reed pipe, which not even a civilized dog can hear without howling, is the only attempt at a *concert* that I ever knew them to be guilty of executing. This discordant clamour appears, nevertheless, to afford them unalloyed satisfaction.

The court of the Lions, which, proceeding from the baths, is entered on its north side, is a rectangular peristyle, 100 feet long, (east and west) and 50 wide. The pillars are of white marble, extremely light and beautiful, and they support a fantastic but elegant series of arches, the superstructure of which is covered with an elaborate fretwork of stuccoed mouldings, representing moresques, and flowers, interspersed with sentences from the Koran, &c.

* A kind of drum, having a small hole in the parchment at one end, through which a close fitting stick is worked up and down so as to produce a noise like that made by a wheel requiring grease.

The pillars, I should observe, are perfectly plain ; and, though methodically arranged, yet, from being disposed in corresponding groups of two, three, and four, produce a very bizarre effect.

In the centre of the court is a handsome fountain. The basin, into which the water rises, is of oriental alabaster, as are also the twelve animals that support it on their backs, and which, by some strange zoological blunder, have been called *lions*, for panthers would be more proper. The reservoir that receives the stream they disgorge is of black marble.

It is not improbable that, on the decadence of Cordoba, this fountain was brought from the famous palace of Zehra, built by the Kaliph Abdalrahman III. as a country retreat for his favourite sultana ; which, embellished, according to common report, with the works of Greecian artists, is said to have contained numerous sculptured animals ; and, amongst others, some golden (meaning probably gilt) lions, that spouted water into a basin of alabaster, are particularly mentioned by Moorish historians.

On the north side of the Court of the Lions is the Hall of the Two Sisters ; so called from two large slabs of delicately white marble that occupy the centre of its floor. This apartment looks upon the fountain in the centre of the court, and directly facing it, on the south side,

is the Hall of the Abencerrages, to which the legend of the cruel massacre of the chieftains of that noble race has given a mournful interest. If the tale be true, (and from the distracted state of Granada under its two last kings there is every reason to believe it is) there can be little reason to doubt that the stains, yet visible in the white marble pavement, were occasioned by the blood of Boabdil's unfortunate victims.

On the same side the Court of the Lions as the Hall of the Abencerrages is a small apartment, wherein, in former days, the Moslem sovereigns sought the *Kiblah*,* and made their private prostrations. It was the burial place of Ishmael Farady, fifth king of Granada, one of the most enterprising monarchs that occupied the throne, but whose voluptuous excesses led to his assassination, A. D. 1322.

The Hall of Judgment is situated at the upper end of the court, and at the eastern extremity of the palace.

All these apartments are almost equally beautiful, though differing from each other in size, shape, and every part of their elaborate decorations. If any one can claim pre-eminence over the others, it is the Hall of the Two Sisters, the ceiling of which is composed of delicate stalactites in stucco, and the colouring and gilding are perhaps fresher and more gaudy. The win-

* The point to which Mohammedans turn when praying.

dows in the back, or north, wall of this apartment look upon the garden of Lindaraja, which is now laid out with some little taste and care.

From this garden, or, by retracing our steps through the baths, we gain a small and exquisitely finished apartment, upon which the Spaniards have bestowed the name of *El Tocador*, or Dressing Room of the Sultana. It is situated in a kind of tower, or buttress, that projects beyond the walls of the fortress, and commands a lovely view in every direction. The mosaic pavement of this little room is of extreme beauty.

The situation of the Hall of the Ambassadors, or "Golden Saloon," to which we will now proceed, has already been described. It is a square of 36 feet, and occupies the whole space enclosed by the walls of the tower of Comares which are of extraordinary thickness. The height of this apartment is 60 feet, and its ceiling, vaulted in a singularly graceful manner, is inlaid with a mosaic of mother of pearl.

This hall is certainly the pride of the Alhambra. Its proportions are more just, its stuccoed walls more highly finished, and the colouring and gilding of its ornaments more brilliant, than those of any of the other apartments. The tower in which it is situated projects far beyond the curtain wall of the fortress; so that, whilst it looks into the refreshing court of the *Alberca*

on one side, from windows in the other three, it commands extensive views over the city, and the dark valley of the Darro. It is the only one of the principal apartments of the palace that possesses this advantage, and it was therefore peculiarly well adapted to the purpose of a hall of audience ; since, the wide circumvallated city spread out below, the fertile plain over which, as far as the eye can range, it commands a view, and the fearful height of the massive walls, upon which its casements look down, could not but impress visitors with a sense of the wealth and power of the ruler of this fair realm, and of the strength of his proud mountain citadel. The windows too of this audience hall, elevated some hundreds of feet above the rocky banks of the Darro, afforded every facility for disposing—after the wonted manner of the Mohammedans—of any contumacious heir presumptive, or other troublesome friend or relative, whose journey to paradise might require hastening.

The view from the eastern window, looking up the valley of the Darro, embraces several objects of much interest ; on the right, projecting boldly into the valley, is the tower surmounted by the Sultana's *Tocador*, which, seen almost to its base, gives a good idea of the height of the Alhambra's walls above the crouching city. Beyond, but situated on the same bank of the river as the fortress, is seen the Palace of the

Generalife, and, above it, the *Silla de los Moros*,* a scarped rock, whereon the Moslems were in the habit of watching the setting sun, as he cast his gorgeous rays upon their beloved Vega. On the opposite side of the valley is the *Sacro Monte* convent, an immense pile, now crumbling to the dust.

The *bassi reliefi* of the stuccoed compartment round this window are very curious, and I should say they represented groups of fishes intermixed with arabesques, but that several great authorities have declared, that in all the decorations of the Alhambra there are no traces of animal or vegetable life.

There are many other objects well worthy of notice within the Royal Palace. Amongst others, the cicerone does not forget to point out the apartments wherein the Sultana *Ayxa* and her unfortunate son Mohammed Abi Abdilehi, or Boabdil, were confined by the licentious Muley Hassan, and the window in the tower of Comares, whence the young prince,—who thus early, even in a father, deserved the surname of *El Zogoybi*,† afterwards bestowed upon him,—was lowered down and escaped from Granada.

The palace contains also a very handsome porcelain vase, said to be of Moorish manufac-

* Seat of the Moors.

† The *little* unfortunate, in allusion rather to the size of his person than the extent of his misfortunes.

ture. Another, which was discovered at the same time in the vaults under the royal apartments, was taken away by Count Sebastiani. The *Granadinos* abuse the French general in most unmeasured terms, for what they term this *theft*; but, if he carried off nothing else from the city, it must be admitted he charged them moderately enough for his guardianship of what he left behind—treasures on which, at that time, they seemed to set no value.

Independent of the interest with which the traveller explores the abode of Granada's Moslem sovereigns, his attention is called, in no slight degree, to the examination of the crumbling ruins of the fortress enclosing it; over every nook of which a fresh charm has been thrown by the delightful tales of Washington Irving, whose *fidus Achates*, “Mateo,” stoutly maintains that the accomplished writer has drawn but slightly on the stores of his imagination.

The views from the walls and lofty towers of the fortress are most extensive and varied. The most comprehensive is from the *Torre de la Vela*,* situated at the western extremity of the Alhambra, whence, besides the view over the city and plain, the eye embraces the whole range of the magnificent *Sierra Nevada*, the peaks of which are several hundred feet higher than the loftiest points of the Pyrenees; and

* Watch Tower.

though not, as is usually supposed, covered with *perpetual* snow, are generally capped with it during nine months of the year. The highest points of the range are the *Cerros de Mulahacen* and *de la Veleta*, bearing S. E. from Granada, and both computed to be upwards of 11,000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean.

On my last visit to Granada, in the month of October, the mountains were perfectly free from snow, and "Mateo" had succeeded in persuading me to mount to their summit under his guidance; a journey of twenty-four hours from the city. The day was fixed accordingly, but, during the night preceding our intended scramble, the whole ridge put on its winter covering, and rendered the undertaking impracticable.

Leaving the fortress by a low sally-port on its north side, we will proceed to visit the *Generalife*, or summer palace of the Moorish kings, situated rather above, but on the slope of the same ridge as the Alhambra, and separated from it by a deep ravine. The path is perfumed with groves of myrtle, orange, and other odoriferous trees; and is shaded with eglantine, woodbine, and wild vines, whose red autumnal leaves, entwined in the evergreen boughs of the overhanging carobs and ilexes, offer an impenetrable shield against the mid-day sun.

The chief attraction of the *Generalife*, (House

of Love) are the refreshing coolness of its courts and apartments, the sweetness and abundance of its crystal waters, the luxuriance of its flowers and fruits, and the beauty of the views that its impending balconies command.

The stucco fretwork and porcelain mosaics, with which the apartments are ornamented, are in the same style as those of the Alhambra; but with the highly finished and gorgeous decorations of the Royal Palace yet fresh in the recollection, those of the *Generalife* appear far inferior. In the opinion of Mr. Murphy, however, the mosaic work in the portico of the *Generalife* not only surpasses any other specimen of Moorish workmanship, but “for variety of execution and delicacy of taste is fully equal, if not superior, to any Roman mosaics which have come down to our times.

I should have been unwilling to admit this, even at the time he wrote; but the late discoveries at Pompeii have brought to light mosaic pavements far exceeding, as well in boldness of design as in beauty of execution and colouring, any thing of the kind that has ever been produced in modern times; and which, whilst causing us to estimate more highly than heretofore the proficiency of the ancients in the art of *drawing*, make us regard the mosaics of the Moors as mere pieces of mechanism.

The wood-work in the roofs of the various

apartments of the *Generalife* is worthy of remark, not only from the beauty of the workmanship, but from its state of preservation. Murphy has fallen into error in translating *Nogal* (of which they are composed) *chesnut*—he should have said *walnut*.

The walls of one of the apartments are decorated with portraits of some of the most renowned warriors who figured in the siege of Granada; amongst others of *Gonzalvo*, “the great Captain;” *Ponce de Leon*, the captor of Alhama; *El Rey Chico*, Boabdil; and Ferdinand and Isabella. They are all said to have been “taken from life,” and the work of one individual.

The gardens of the *Generalife* are more pleasing from the luxuriant growth of their flowers and fruits, than for the manner in which they are laid out. One must taste the *pomegranate* of the Generalife to appreciate fully the value of that refreshing fruit; and he who has eaten of its muscatel grapes can have no doubt of the wine house, from whence Ganymede supplied the cups of the thirsty olympics.

At a certain cypress-tree that grows within the walled court of the palace, “*Mateo*” mysteriously wags his head; and should any curiosity be evinced at this intimation of a tale that he could unfold, will open a budget of Royal scandal, purloined from Florian, and other ro-

mancers, which furnishes him with the means of displaying his historic lore for the rest of the evening.

Descending from the *Generalife*, and crossing the “golden” Darro ere it enters the city, we will mount the rough streets of the Albayzin. The hill side is perforated with numerous caverns, many of which are tenanted by a singularly savage race of beings, who, differing in character from either Moors or Spaniards, appear to be descended from the aborigines of the country.

Several curious wells, arches, and other Moorish remains, are to be seen in the quarter of the Albayzin; and the view it commands is one of the finest in Granada, embracing the greater part of the city, and the richly wooded bank, whereon are perched the bright *Generalife*, and the sombre *Alhambra*, backed by the snow-clad ridge of *Nevada*.

Amongst the numerous Moorish reliques that the city contains, the most perfect, perhaps, are the baths. But, at every turn, a ruined bridge, a dilapidated gateway, or some other memento of the Saracens, presents itself, giving Granada peculiar interest in the eyes of the seeker after Moorish antiquities. Neither in modern sights does it fall short of other more populous and flourishing cities.

The Cathedral is not so large nor so hand-

some as that of Malaga. The interior is heavy, excessively gaudy, and fitted up in the worst possible taste. The architecture is Corinthian, but of a very spurious sort. Some good paintings are to be found distributed in the various chapels ; the best are in that of the *Santissima Trinidad*, viz.—the Trinity, by *Cano*, and a Holy Family by *Murillo*—the latter a masterpiece.

The pillars round the *Altar Mayor*—above which rises the Dome—are richly gilt ; and the light admitted by painted windows, above and behind, has a fine effect. Some paintings by *Cano*, under the Dome, are very good, and the Cathedral is ornamented with two busts of great merit, (Adam and Eve) by the same master, whose talented hand directed the chisel with the same success as the pencil.

The *Capilla de los Reyes Catolicos* communicates with the Cathedral, but is under a separate roof. It is of Gothic architecture, and celebrated for a flat arch of remarkable boldness, which supports its roof. The remains of Ferdinand and Isabella, and their immediate successors, Philip and Joanna, are deposited in this chapel. Their tombs, executed by order of the Emperor Charles V., are superbly sculptured. That of the “Catholic Kings” is the most elaborately wrought and highly finished ; but the other is lighter, and displays more elegance of design. The recumbent figures of Ferdinand

and Isabella are remarkably well carved ;—the repose in the queen's countenance is incomparably expressed. The same cannot be said of the manner in which the "mad" Joanna and her Austrian husband have been sculptured ; with the latter of whom, at all events, the artist could not offer the usual excuse, that crowned heads are difficult *subjects* to manage, since the Spaniards themselves surnamed Philip "*El Hermoso*."*

In ascending rather too hastily and unguardedly from the tomb of the conquerors of Granada, I struck my head against the iron grating above, and was laid prostrate and senseless at the foot of the altar. It required a good pint of the church wine—which our worthy, priestly cicerone insisted upon administering, both internally and externally—to set me up again ; and, as a reward for my patience under suffering, he showed us the splendidly illuminated missal, used by the "Catholic Kings," and deposited with the crown, sword, and sceptre of the great Ferdinand, in the sacristy of the Cathedral.

The church of San Geronimo is one of the oldest in Granada—which city boasts of being the first in Spain that embraced Christianity—*San Cicilio*, one of the seven apostles ordained by Peter and Paul, having founded a church at Eliberi, in the first century.† It contains some

* The handsome.

† Florez—*España Sagrada*.

paintings said to be by Murillo, but is more celebrated as being the burial-place of *Gonzalvo de Cordoba*. A plain white marble slab, let into the pavement at the foot of the principal altar, and bearing the following simple inscription, is all that marks the spot where the remains of the greatest captain Spain ever produced were interred.

Gonzali Fernandez
de Cordova
Sui propriâ virtute
magni ducis nomen
proprium sibi fecit
ossâ
perpetua tandem
luci restituenda
huic interea loculo
credita sunt
gloria minime consepulta.

The church of *San Juan de Dios* is well worthy a visit; though its decorations are rather gaudy than handsome. It contains a few small, but very good paintings by *Cano*, and a valuable silver urn, embossed with gold, wherein are deposited—so the Spaniards assert—the bones of our Saviour's favourite disciple, who died at Granada.

There are many other churches deserving of the traveller's notice, but it would be tedious to enumerate them. To the lovers of Rossini's music, however, I would recommend a visit to that of *San Domingo* during *High Mass*. I once heard there the whole of the airs from *Mosé in Egitto*, besides various *pezzi scelti* from

the *Gazza ladra*, to which, in England, we dance quadrilles.

The Carthusian Convent (*extra muros*) is noted for its riches, and collection of paintings. We could not gain admission on our first visit; as, after toiling up the eminence on which it is situated, we found the grating in the portal closed by a board, announcing "*Hoy se sacan animas*"—To-day souls are extracting from purgatory;—a praiseworthy occupation, from which it would have been sinful to take the worthy friars; although it was gently hinted to us, that a few *pesetas* would remove any scruples *they* might entertain. The day following, however,—the funds for suborning the devil having been exhausted,—we were admitted to inspect the interior of the convent. It contains numerous paintings, some few said to be by Murillo, others by Cano; but I doubt whether either of those great masters ever touched them. The rest are mere daubs, representing the persecutions of the monks by Henry VIII, by the Moors, and by the German Lutherans.

The *Hermita de San Anton* is a small edifice on the outskirts of the city, which, on a certain day in the spring of the year, is endowed with the singular power of curing horses of the *cholic*; all that is required being to ride them nine times, at a brisk pace, round the exterior of the church—*ni mas ni menos*.

CHAPTER XII.

GRANADA CONTINUED—THE ZACATIN — MARKET PLACE — BAZAAR—POPULATION — THE GRANADINOS — THEIR PREDILECTION FOR THE FRENCH COSTUME — LOVE OF MASKED BALLS — MADAME MARTINEZ DE LA ROSA'S TERTULIA — AN ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE METAMORPHOSED—SPECIMEN OF SPANISH TASTE IN FITTING UP COUNTRY HOUSES—THE MARQUES DE MONTIJO — ANECDOTE OF THE LATE KING AND THE CONDE DE TEBA — CONSTITUTIONAL ENTHUSIASM OF GRANADA—ENDS IN SMOKE — MILITARY SCHOOLS — OBSERVATIONS ON THE SPANISH ARMY—DEPARTURE FOR CORDOBA — PINOS DE LA PUENTE—PUERTO DE LOPE—MOCLIN—ALCALA LA REAL — SPANISH PEASANTS—MANNER OF COMPUTING DISTANCE—BAENA — NOT THE ROMAN TOWN OF ULIA—CASTRO EL RIO—OCCUPIED BY A CAVALRY REGIMENT—VALUABLE FRIEND—CURIOSITY OF THE SPANISH OFFICERS—DITTO OF OUR NEW ACQUAINTANCE—INFLUENCE OF “SHERRIS SACK”—HE RELATES HIS HISTORY—CONTINUATION OF OUR JOURNEY TO CORDOBA—FIRST VIEW OF THAT CITY.

GRANADA is the see of an archbishop, and the seat of one of the two high courts of Chancery of Spain. It is not a place of much trade, its inhabitants being chiefly employed in horticultural pursuits; but it contains manufactories of gunpowder, of silk and woollen goods on a small scale, and numerous tanneries.

The busiest part of the city is a narrow

crooked street, which still retains its corrupted Moorish name, *El Zacatin*,* the little market. But the square where the market is now held (likewise a relique of the Moors,) presents also, at certain times, a scene of considerable bustle. The houses encompassing it are very lofty, and, at each successive story, have wide projecting galleries, wherein dwell the lowest classes of Granada's inhabitants. The arches of these galleries are patched up with old pieces of board, canvas, and other materials, of all sizes and shapes, between the chinks, and crevices, and rents of which, smoke issues in every direction.

Towards the centre of the city is a *bazaar*, constructed, not like our London toy fairs so called, but on the oriental plan, each little gloomy stall being boarded off from the rest. The goods, also, as in the east, are offered for sale by smoking men, instead of being, as with us, handed to you by smiling houries. The modern merchants, however, enter their shops by a door, instead of clambering over the counter; and they occupy chairs instead of sitting in the cross-legged fashion of the founders of this remnant of Mohammedanism. At a certain hour in the evening the bazaar is closed, and given over to the care of three or four large dogs, which, shut into the building

* From the Arabic word *suk*, a place of sale.

for the night, will not suffer any one to enter but him whose office it is to feed them, and to unlock the gates.

The population of Granada may be reckoned at 60,000 souls ; and I think the female portion of it the *least good looking*, not to speak harshly, of all the dark complexioned natives of southern Spain. The *Granadinas* have not the carriage of either the *Sevillanas*, or *Gaditanas*, nor even of the *Malagueñas*, who are celebrated rather for beauty than *gracia* ; and, consequently, the lovely *Alameda*, on the banks of the Genil, has no attraction for strangers beyond that of its own intrinsic beauty.

The ladies of Granada lose somewhat, perhaps, in the comparison with the fair of other places, from having adopted, in a greater degree, a harlequin French costume, that but ill becomes them,—or, more correctly speaking, perhaps, that they do not become. Thus, the admirable *set* of their well poised heads is lost under a huge silk *chapeau* and groves of *Roses de Meaux*, clematis, and woodbine ; their lustrous eyes no longer range, *en barbette*, as it were, over three quarters of a circle, but, pointed through a narrow embrasure, can only carry destruction in one direction. Their fans, too,—telegraphs of their slightest wishes or commands,—can no longer be flirted with the wonted effect ; and their stately, though somewhat pe-

culiar gait, does not receive its just tribute of admiration, unless set off by the black silk *basquiña*, under whose graceful folds their well tutored limbs have been accustomed to move.

The *Granadinas* of all classes are passionately fond of masked balls; which circumstance may partly be accounted for by one of the above-named disadvantages under which they labour—want of beauty; and all the masquerades at which I “assisted” seemed expressly got up for carrying on intrigues. No *character*, in any sense of the word, appeared to be maintained; and the whole amusement seemed to consist in the ladies going about to the gentlemen, who were almost all unmasked, and asking in a screaming voice, “*mi conoces?*”*

Although every body went to these balls, which were held at the theatre, yet, amongst the *elite*, it was deemed *fashionable* (now quite a Spanish word) for the ladies to have a box and receive masks. But the temptation of the waltz was too strong to be resisted, and all, I observed, descended occasionally, putting on a mask and domino, to join in its fascinating circumgyrations.

A letter of introduction to Madame *Martinez de la Rosa*,† equally noted for her accom-

* Dost thou know me?

† The husband of this lady was at the time of which I write, as he has lately again been, Prime Minister of Spain. Though universally

plishments and her hospitality, gave us an opportunity of seeing the best society of Granada. The same want of beauty was observable amongst the *beau monde* at her *Tertulia*, as on the *paseo* on the banks of the river ; but, to make amends, the music and waltzing were particularly good. The Spaniards may certainly be reckoned the best waltzers in Europe, now that the Germans have converted that graceful dance into a mere bear's hug.

I afforded some amusement in the course of the first evening passed at Madame Martinez' house, by asking a Spanish gentleman the name of a most laborious performance, which all appeared to be engaged in with great delight, to the total sacrifice of the graces. He started back with astonishment. “ What description of dance ? why it is an *English country dance !* ” He thought it too good a joke to keep to himself, and, the performance concluded, went about telling all the ladies they had so disguised an English country dance that one of its countrymen did not recognise it. This information occasioned great dismay, *contra danzas Inglesas* being, at that particular juncture, “ *muy facionables* ; ” and all the *Señoritas* crowded round with exclamatory “ *Jesuses !* ” to gather

admitted to be a man of great talent, his views are considered too “ *confined* ” for “ the circumstances of the country ; ” and he has each time been obliged to make way for more “ *stirring men* . ”

the appalling truth from my own lips, and ask instructions as to their future proceedings.

I explained, in the best manner I could, that, though the ladies and gentlemen in our national dance were deployed in two long opposing lines ; in the same way that their sexes had respectively been drawn up, yet that various preliminary evolutions were performed by us, ere the parties began racing up and down the middle at full speed, in which their imitation entirely consisted ; and, moreover, that we did not hurry the matter over, by beginning at *both ends*, as they did.

Before leaving Granada, a favourable opportunity presenting itself, I will enable my readers to form some idea of the taste and style in which the Spanish aristocracy fit up their country houses, taking as my pattern that of the *Marques de Montijo*, which, combining the comforts of the English with the classic taste of the French, I was assured I should find a very choice specimen. It is situated on a slightly elevated hill, rising from and commanding a lovely view over the wide *vega*. For the selection of the site, small praise is due, however, to the Marquis, as he would have had difficulty in fixing on any spot within the same distance of the city, that did not afford equally as fine a view. But the embellishments of the house and grounds are “ all his own ; ” to these, therefore, I shall confine my description.

The grounds are laid out in stiff parterres, intersected with twisting footpaths, “*à la Inglesa*,” as they call it; a portion being hedged off as a labyrinth, which is thickly studded with rustic arbours, furnished with modern sofas. On the summit of an artificial hillock is a shallow fish-pond, from the centre of which rises a cave, or grotto (built, I believe, in imitation of the Giant’s Causeway), composed of fragments of stalactites, brought at a great expense from a cavern in a distant mountain.

A whirligig, with two horses and two *coches* — such as may be seen at Bartholomew fair — weathercocks of all sizes and devices, sun-dials innumerable, hedge-rows of zoophytes, &c. are scattered tastefully about, and in fact nothing is wanting but “the sucking pig in lavender,” and “Adam and Eve in juniper,” of the inimitable Mr. Drugget, to complete the long catalogue of absurdities.

The show-suite of apartments consists of a succession of small carpetless rooms on the ground-floor, each furnished with a bed, a few shabby gilt chairs, a sofa, some yet more Monmouth-street-looking chintz window curtains, a profusion of miserly little mirrors, and two or three old family pictures.

In the library, which contained some hundreds of ill-bound books, chiefly French, sat the Marquis himself — the genius of the place — a grandee of Spain of the first class, a reputed

scholar, dilettante, and patron of the fine arts ; a distinguished statesman, and at one time a pretender to the regency of Spain ; now, alas ! the victim of paralysis, disappointed intrigues, inordinate vanity, and insane ambition.*

Whilst at Malaga I had become slightly acquainted with the Marquis's brother, the *Conde de Teba*, who, by turns, a violent *Legitimista*, *Afrancesado*, and *Exaltado*, was then, in the latter character, doing duty as corporal in the *City Light Horse*, and bore about on his crippled person the just reward of his treason to his country, having received a wound which disfigured him for life, whilst serving in the French ranks.

The *Conde* married a Miss K——, "the beautiful and accomplished daughter" (as the newspapers say) of one of the first British merchants of Malaga. His union with this lady had been forbidden by the late king of Spain, on the grounds that the pure blood of a Spanish grandee was not to be contaminated by admixture with the grosser current flowing in plebeian

* I have already warned my readers, that in publishing the journal of my various wanderings, it did not form part of my plan to specify dates with any precision. I should perhaps state, however, that it was *not* on the occasion of my first visit to Granada that I saw the Marquis of Montijo, nor, indeed, do I think he had then retired from public life. But, at all events, if his so doing be considered a matter of history, it is so unimportant a one, as to excuse my here describing him eight or ten years older, and much more infirm, than he really was at the time of which I write.

veins. To overcome this objection, reference was made to the heraldic records of Scotland (the country of the lady's family), and a genealogical tree was shipped off to Spain, which proved without flaw, cross-bar, or blemish, that the family of K——— was an offset from the great Fingal himself. Ferdinand, who, morose as he has usually been represented, enjoyed a joke as much as most people, burst into a hearty laugh on this document being placed before him, exclaiming at length, “In God's name, let Teba marry the Scotch king's daughter !”

This speech, though made in perfect good humour, was not soon forgotten by the lady, who, when I had the pleasure of meeting her, wore round her king-hating person (forgetting her high descent) the terrific words, *constitucion ó muerte*, embroidered on a green sash ribbon.

Granada, by the way, is reckoned a most constitutional city. I first visited it a few months previous to the invasion of the Duc d'Angoulême, when every one breathed the most deadly hate against the French, and every thing promised a most sanguinary struggle. The streets of Granada, if the vile *Gavachos* ever got so far, were to be their burial place ; the city was to be another Zaragoza ; the contest another “*guerra hasta el cuchillo.*”* I pictured to myself the beauteous groves of the

* War to the knife.

Generalife formed into a battis to defend the town ; the pure streams of the Darro and Genil reddened with the gore of its brave inhabitants ; the tottering towers of the elevated Alhambra pounded into dust ; the venerable deputy-governor* of the royal palace exposed to the insults of a licentious soldiery ! Happily, however, all my anticipated fears were groundless. The French troops marched quietly into the city long after the garrison had left it by an opposite gate, and the invaders were received by the inhabitants with every outward mark of neighbourly esteem and affection.

During the first days of the constitutional portion of the reign of Ferdinand "the beloved," military schools were established in most of the principal cities of the kingdom. That of Granada was on a scale proportioned to the "*exaltacion*" of the place, 90 students being maintained at it. A large monastery, which, ever since the expulsion of the Moslems, had been under the protecting care of St. Jerome, was handed over to the more bellicose *Santiago*,† for the purpose of training up the youthful *Granadinos* to deeds of arms ; and if the saint-militant attended to their studies as well as he did to their feeding and clothing, no complaint could possibly be brought against him.

* I certainly am right in calling the old lady *governor*, since we pray in our churches for "our most gracious queen and governor."

† St. James ; the patron saint of Spain.

The attempt to regenerate the national army by the infusion of a body of *educated* officers, whose advancement should depend entirely upon their own conduct and acquirements, was a praiseworthy effort to break through the barriers of presumption, ignorance, and vice, with which the pampered nobles of Spain had, until then, closed the door of promotion against every kind of merit ; reserving for themselves all the most influential and lucrative posts, and placing in the inferior, the illegitimate branches of their houses, their numerous hangers-on and menials, and, even yet worse, the debased panders to their vices.

But venality is so strictly entailed upon all public departments in Spain, that the same gross corruption and glaring favouritism continued, as before, to regulate the distribution of favour and promotion. The patronage had passed into other hands, but the new hands were not more delicate than the old ; “*aunque vistan à la mona de seda, mona se queda.*”* Legitimists and liberals were both equally corrupt ; their object was the same, namely, to fill their pockets from the public purse. The difference between them consisted merely in the means by which they effected their purpose. The intrigues that had formerly been employed to manage the *court* were now directed to in-

* Though you dress up a monkey in silk, a monkey he remains.

fluence the *political clubs*, and, under their dictation, the constitutional ministers (to retain their places) were obliged to nominate the noisiest braggarts to the command of their armies, and select for all the minor posts such as were most vociferous in their cries of “constitution or death.” These, as might naturally have been expected, were, for the most part, lawyers’ clerks, tavern waiters, and barbers’ apprentices—self-imagined *Gracchi* and *Bruti*, who thought they would be doing a great public good by bettering their own particular condition. The youths, who, under the *new system*, crowded the military schools, were all chosen under the same influence, and mostly from the same class. But whatever germs of future Cids and Gonzalvos these seminaries may have cherished, not any were destined to reach maturity, for, Santiago not being so quick in his operations as San Anton, the French army cut up the tree of liberty, root and branch, ere these seeds of military greatness had even sprung up.

The extraordinary deterioration that has taken place in the Spanish army, since the days of Philip II., is only to be accounted for by the demoralized state of the upper ranks of society, and the consequent corruption that pervades every department of the state. The soldiers, who now *run away*, are chosen from the same race of men, that fought so gallantly under the

Dukes of Alba and Parma ; the religion they profess is the same that it was then, nay is stript in some slight degree of its bigotry and superstition. The last king to whom they swore obedience, was not a whit more despotic than any of his predecessors ; so that it is futile to say, that tyranny or liberty had any weight in the matter. Could any sway be more absolute than that of the Spanish sovereigns of the House of Hapsburg ? and yet under them the Spaniards behaved most nobly. Would it be possible to frame a more liberal constitution than that of 1820 ? and yet no troops ever conducted themselves more shamefully than those ranged under its standard.

Nor can this marked change be attributed to any inferiority of theoretical military knowledge on the part of the Spanish nation ; for their schools of artillery and engineers are indisputably good, and their military writers by no means behind the age. Indeed, the “*reflexiones militares*” of the *Marques de Santa Cruz* may be traced throughout the scientific pages of Jomini and Dumas, and are, in fact, the groundwork of some tactical compilations of recent date in our own language.

The experience of the *War of Independence* proved, however, that very few officers of superior rank in the Spanish army were qualified

to command;* and, at the same time, one cannot but be struck at the very small number amongst the inferior grades, who rose to distinction during the long period of its continuance.

The civil war that followed brought forward no new men of military talent; and the invasion of the French, in 1823, proved the utter incapacity of all the leaders who had been transformed into generals under the constitutional government.

The bombast of these latter worthies rendered their imbecility the more ridiculous. I heard one say to the late Sir George Don, just before the entry of the Duc d'Angoulême into Spain, “If we *Spaniards* drove the French across the Pyrenees, like a flock of sheep (!) when commanded by Napoleon’s best generals, with how much greater ease shall we now do so, being led only by a despotic Bourbon!”

Not very long after, I witnessed an act of imbecility yet more laughable. In ascending the staircase of the government house at Gibraltar one morning, I saw, on the landing place, a Spanish general officer (then, as *at this moment*, holding a most important command) explaining to an officer of the governor’s staff

* I speak only of the officers of the *Regular* army, not of the *Guerrilla* chieftains, who, without performing the prodigies of valour *stated by themselves*, often behaved most gallantly, manœuvred with great skill, and did good service to the general cause.

how, by “*una grande combinacion*,” he, Riego, and other “*inclitos heroes*,” proposed cutting off Marshal Molitor’s division of the French army, then marching on Granada. As the success of their combined operations depended entirely upon the *secrecy* and celerity with which they were to be conducted, it could not but be extremely amusing to hear the gallant general explain the “whole progress” of the affair, before a host of orderly serjeants, messengers, and servants; who, attracted to the spot by his loquacity and gesticulations, were listening with open-mouthed astonishment, to the elucidation of his cunningly devised plan. Ere I passed on, I too was fortunate enough to witness the hypothetical termination of “his marchings and counter-marchings,” in the most complete success; as, suiting the action to the word, he described a wide circle with his outstretched arms and gold-headed cane, and enclosed the outmanœuvred French marshal and his entire *corps d’armée*.

The result of this “*grande combinacion*” turned out, however, to be that the Marshal effected the passage of the mountains between Guadiz and Granada, ere the Spanish captain general had yet fully explained the impossibility of his escaping from the strategical toils *about to be* spread for him.

Return we now to Granada — from which

city, having announced at Madame Martinez' tertulia that it was our intention to depart on the following morning, taking the road to Cordoba, certain symptoms of uneasy curiosity were manifested, attended with sundry mysterious hints, that led us to fancy some extraordinary perils were to be encountered on that particular road. Less communicative than the Spanish captain general, however, the utmost we could elicit from our various acquaintances was, that the country round about the city whither we were about to proceed, was in a very *volcanic* state, and that a political explosion might be daily expected.

As none of our party had professed an over-boiling admiration of the existing state of things, I believe we were set down as aiders and abettors in the revolt of the troops which shortly afterwards took place—though not until we had safely returned to the shelter of the British fortress.

We left Granada as proposed, taking the direct road to Cordoba, by Alcalà la real. As far as that town, the road, at the period of which I write, was the only carriage route leading from Granada towards Madrid. Another by way of Jaen has been opened within the last few years. If ocular demonstration of this first-named road being practicable for carriages had not, however, been afforded us, we

should certainly have doubted the possibility of any thing less fragile than a bullock's cart getting over some parts of it; but as far as Piños de la Puente, that is, for the first twelve miles, it is tolerably good, traversing the north-eastern portion of the *Vega*, and leaving the Sierra de Elvira at some little distance on the right. The village of Piños stands on the right bank of the river Cubillas, and inscriptions, which have been found and are preserved there, prove it to have been the town of Ilurco, mentioned by Pliny. It is celebrated, in more recent times, as a spot where many a fierce struggle took place between the Moors and Christians; for, in their forays into each other's country, the bridge of Piños was generally the point chosen for effecting a passage across the impracticable little stream that, in this direction, bounds the *Vega*.

The hilly country begins immediately on leaving Piños de la puente, and a fine view is obtained from the heights above the village: Granada, and the line of mountains beyond, are seen to great advantage, and to the right lies the rich *vega*, stretching westward as far as Loja. The *Soto de Roma** occupies the very heart of the fruitful plain; appearing from hence to be thickly wooded. Such, however, is

* The name of an estate granted to the Duke of Wellington.—See Chap. xiii., Vol. 2.

not the case, although some well grown timber is upon one part of it.

Proceeding onwards, over a very hilly country, and crossing the little river Moclin, in an hour and a half we reached the *Venta del puerto Lope*, (pass of Lopez) distant six miles from *Piños de la puente*. About three miles beyond the *Venta*, a view of the most romantic kind presents itself. The *Sierra Nevada*, and part of the plain of Granada, are seen through a tremendous rent that intersects the lofty mountains which now encircle the traveller ; the entrance of the rugged defile being defended by two towers, standing on bold, and almost inaccessible, rocks.

Some miles up this impracticable *tajo*, is situated the crag-based fortress of Moclin, which, from the command it possessed of the principal pass through this mountain range, was called by the Moors, "the Shield of Granada." The celebrated *Conde de Cabra* experienced a signal defeat in attempting to surprise this fortress ; which, a few years after, (A. D. 1487) fell into the hands of Ferdinand the Catholic, by the accidental explosion of its powder-magazine.

About a league from the *Puerto de Lope*, the town of Illora, erroneously placed *on* the road in most maps, is seen two miles off, on the left. It stands on a rocky eminence, crowned by an old castle, and overlooking a fertile plain. The

ancient name of the place is lost ; but it was one of the strongholds of the Moors, and fell to the Christian arms only a few weeks prior to the capture of Moclin, when the renowned *Gonzalvo* was appointed its *Alcaide*.

The country henceforth becomes more open and cultivated, but the soil looks cold and ungrateful after that of the plain of Granada. The hills bordering the road are studded with towers at the distance of about a league asunder, which, in the days of the Moslems, must have formed a very perfect line of telegraphic communication between the capital and the northern frontier towns of the kingdom of Granada.

The old castle of *Alcalà la real*, situated on an eminence, is seen at a considerable distance, and, on a near approach, some modern works thrown up by the French give it rather an imposing appearance. The town is so pent in by hills as not to be seen until one has passed under the triumphal arch by which it is entered. It was called by the Moors *Alcalà Abenzaide*, the Castle (*Al Kala*) of Abenzaide, and received its present distinguished name on falling to the victorious arms of Alfonzo XI. A.D. 1340. From this date it became the principal bulwark of the Christian frontier, and the base of most of the offensive operations undertaken against Granada. A remarkable

brick tower, built by the *Conde de Tendilla* as a night beacon, to assist the erring footsteps of the Christians in escaping from captivity, still stands on an elevated knoll, clear of all the other hills, on the opposite side of the town to the castle.

Antiquaries are at issue as to what Roman town stood in this important position. Some imagine it to be the situation of the *Agla menor* of Pliny; whilst others—as it appears to me with more reason, considering the order in which that methodical writer enumerated the cities of note lying between Boëtis and the Sea—are of opinion that it is the site of *Ebura Cerealis*.

Alcalà la real has always been considered a military post of importance, and many a desperate conflict has been witnessed from its walls. The last (not a very desperate one, however) was in January, 1810, between a division of the French army, commanded by General Sebastiani, and a disorganized mob of Spaniards, under Areizaga,—by turns the most rash, and most desponding, and always the least successful, of all the Spanish generals. By the defeat of the Spanish host, the road to Granada was thrown open to the invaders.

The Old Castle, called *La Mota*, is a Moorish work, which the French strengthened by some interior retrenchments. The city, though sunk

in a deep hollow, stands high as compared with the surrounding country ; the springs on the opposite sides of the chain on which it is situated falling to the Guadalquivir and Genil respectively. The streets are tolerably wide and well paved, but steep ; the *plaza* is spacious, and rather handsome ; the Alameda is shady, and abounding in fountains ; and the *Posada* vile, and overrun with vermin. The population may be estimated at 4000 *vecinos escasos*,* or 20,000 souls, including the inmates of six large convents.

On our next day's journey, to *Castrò el Rio*, we were most disagreeably convinced of the little dependence that can be placed on the information of the peasantry respecting distance. They invariably compute space by *time* ; an hour's ride being reckoned one league. As, however, the rate at which their animals travel is by no means the same, their computation of distance varies accordingly ; so that a man possessed of a good mule reckons that distance seven leagues, which the owner of the more tardy *burro* estimates at nine. To exemplify this by our own case—we set out from Alcalà under the impression, received overnight from infor-

* The amount of population in Spanish towns is calculated by *vecinos* ; the term in a literal sense meaning neighbours, but in this case implying *hearths*, or *families*. Each *vecino* is computed at six souls, unless they are specified as being *escasos*, (scanty) when five only are reckoned for each.

mation obtained from a party of *arrieros*—that the distance to *Baena* was seven leagues. After riding *an hour* we overtook two peasants, mounted on sorry animals, who told us it was still seven leagues. Ten minutes after, (fancying we must have taken a wrong road) we questioned a priest, bestriding a sleek mule, and learnt that it was four leagues to *Baena*, or *five* from a knoll some *hundred yards* behind us. In another hour the distance had increased to four leagues and three quarters; but for the next hour and a half, we proceeded in the proper descending progression, until we had reduced the distance to three leagues, and a shrug of the shoulders, implying good measure.

With this radius, and *Baena* as a centre, we were doomed to describe the arc of a circle for two tedious hours; and at length, by a figure which it would be difficult to explain geometrically, found ourselves suddenly within a league and a half of our destination. From this stage, our journey diminished pretty regularly to its end, excepting that we were a quarter of a league from that desideratum before we were half of one!

I think the real distance may be reckoned twenty-four English miles; for it occupied us seven hours to accomplish. The country is rough and intricately broken, without being elevated; and it is devoid of much interest.

The road is a mere mule track, (for from Alcalà the Madrid road proceeds to Alcaudete) and must be almost impassable in winter, as well from the stiff, clayey nature of the soil, as from the depth of the mountain rivulets which have to be forded, and which are very numerous. The plains, which here and there present themselves, are well, that is generally, cultivated ; producing corn chiefly. The line of beacon-towers is continued along the points of the distant hills.

The town of *Alcaudete* (distant three leagues from Alcalà) lies about six miles off the road on the right ; and *Luque* (some little distance farther on) stands on a slight eminence, about a mile and a half off, on the left.

On drawing near *Baena*, the country becomes wooded with olives, and the hills lose somewhat of their asperity. It is a large town, containing 1000 *Vecinos*, and stands on the side of a rugged mound, overhanging the right bank of the little river *Marbella*. The summit of the crag, in the usual Moorish fashion, is crowned by an old castle, the *enceinte* of which is rather extensive. The walls of the town are also standing, and, within the last few years, have been plastered up and loop-holed, to enable them to resist a *coup de main*, or an attack of cholera.

Baena is another town to which antiquaries

are puzzled to affix a Roman name. By some it is imagined to be *Ulia*; but this I do not think at all likely, for, in the first place, the Itinerary of Antoninus makes *Ulia* distant but eighteen Roman miles from Cordoba, whereas Baena is, at least, thirty two; and, in the next, because Cæsar, who, on his second coming to Spain, found his own army assembled at *Obulco*, (Porcuna) and that of his adversaries besieging *Ulia*,* would scarcely have ventured to make a flank movement on *Cordoba*, to draw Cneus Pompey from the siege of *Ulia*, leaving his own magazines exposed to the enemy within half a day's march of that place. Had he been strong enough to act in the bold manner this would imply, it seems more probable that he would have marched at once with his whole army to the relief of the beleaguered fortress. It strikes me, as being more probable, that *Baena* is the *Baebro* of Pliny, enumerated by that author (amongst the towns of note on the left bank of the Guadalquivir) next in order to *Castra Vinaria*, now *Castrò el Rio*.

The last Moslem King of Granada, the "luckless" *Boabdil*, made prisoner at the battle of Lucena, (A. D. 1483), was confined for some time in the castle of *Baena*; in which also the banners and other trophies, taken on the field of battle, were deposited by the victor, the enterprising *Conde de Cabra*.

* *Hirtius—de Bello Hisp.*

The accommodation of the Posada we found very *hard*; so, after exploring the place, and attempting to take a *Siesta*, we proceeded on to *Castrò El Rio*. The distance from *Baena* to this place is two very short leagues—scarcely more than six miles. The road, during the greater part of the way, is along the confined valley of the *Marbella*; but, on approaching *Castrò*, the bounding hills gradually lose themselves in an extensive plain, that stretches along the winding course of the River *Badajocillo*.

Castrò El Rio has all the appearance of a very ancient place, and almost all accounts agree in placing at this spot the Roman city of *Castra Vinaria*, called, in some authors, *Castra Postumii*.* It is now an insignificant and thinly populated place, having little or no trade; and most of the land in its vicinity is laid out in pasture. The River *Badajocillo*, or *Guadajoz*, washes its walls, and, by many, is supposed to be the *Salsus*, so frequently mentioned in the “Spanish war” of *Hirtius*; but without any reason, that I have been able to discover, if we are to place reliance in that author’s description of the river and adjacent country.

We found *Castrò* occupied by the head-

* The Eton Atlas, however, places *Ulia* on the spot where *Castrò el Rio* now stands, and gives the name of *Silicense* to the River *Guadajoz*.

quarters and greater part of one of the royal regiments of Carbineers; and every stable in the place being crowded with the troopers' horses, we had the greatest difficulty in obtaining accommodation for our own wearied animals. Indeed, but for the interference of a *Caballero*, muffled up in a capacious cloak (who seemed to possess extraordinary influence over the Innkeeper), we should have been obliged to proceed on, or bivouac outside the walls of the town. His interference, however, caused a small shed, crowded with mules and *borricos*, to be cleared for the reception of our horses, into which, after some little trouble, they were all squeezed. A room for ourselves we were assured was quite out of the question ;—and, as for beds, every mattress, bolster, *manta*, and blanket, that the *posada* afforded, had been secured by the Spanish officers. The same civil and influential personage again, however, befriended us, for, after a short time, whilst we were consulting where we should spread our cloaks for the night, the Innkeeper came to acquaint us that “ *ese Caballero Español* ”* had resigned in our favour “ *una pequeñissima sala*, ”† which had been reserved for his use ; and that he had further directed it to be furnished with four sacks of chopped straw for our accommodation.

* That Spanish gentleman.

† A very small parlour.

The Spanish officers, who had entered into conversation with us whilst standing at the portal of the posada, evinced great curiosity to know whence we had come, whither we were going, and what was the motive for our travelling, and very civilly invited us to pass the evening with them at some house where they were in the habit of assembling nightly. But being both hungry and weary, we made the latter an excuse for declining their invitation. They then plied us with questions touching the state of Granada; asked our opinion of the political condition of the kingdom in general; and, complaining of the difficulty experienced in obtaining news of any kind that could be relied on, begged to be informed if we had recently heard of any thing stirring at Madrid, and whether we purposed visiting that capital. To all these queries we replied that, our object being merely amusement, we had not troubled ourselves much by inquiring into the state of parties—that every thing seemed to be quiet wherever we had been—and that our future plans were undetermined.

With numerous offers of service, they then wished us good night, and we betook ourselves to the *Sala*, sending a message to the *Caballero*, who had so kindly given it up, to request he would do us the pleasure of joining his smoke

with our's ; an invitation that did not require pressing.

Our visitor, whom we now had an opportunity of inspecting more closely and critically, was a tall, powerful man, with marked but good features, though the general expression of his countenance was decidedly bad. His brows were dark and shaggy, his cheeks covered with a forest of whisker, and his fierce, uneasy eyes intimated that he was one who had stopped and would stop at nothing to effect his purpose.

His curiosity concerning the object of our travels was not less, though more guardedly expressed, than that of the Spanish officers ; and, by degrees, a kind of distrust, with which at first he evidently regarded us, wore off, and he expressed his unbounded love for and admiration of the English nation, collectively and individually. “ I have seen much of your compatriots,” he proceeded, filling himself a bumper of wine, “ though of late years my opportunities of mixing with them have been but few. I have ever found them to be true lovers of liberty — ever ready to lend a helping hand to neighbours in distress ; yes, yes ! whenever an oppressed people stand up for their rights, *carajo !** an Englishman has a G— d—n in his mouth, and a musket on his shoulder in a *credo*.—*Pardiez, Señores !* but these are ex-

* A common ejaculation of all Spaniards.

cellent cigars! They are indeed *legítimos*,* and, entre nous, they are the only things being *legítimas* that I have any great taste for. To you Englishmen I may say as much. You, like myself, are lovers of constitutional liberty—detesters of absolutism, of a domineering aristocracy, of religious bigotry, and priestly mum-mery. These things are all very well for the ignorant; but we, who have read, and studied, and reflected, know the just value to set upon them."

We gave a ready assent.

"This wine is sad trash," he continued, after a flask of execrable black strap had been disposed of, "and I know that you English like a good glass of *Xeres seco*. I will therefore take the liberty, *con licencia*, of sending for some that I think will please your palate." Upon which, calling the *mozo* charged with the care of the stables, he directed him to go to the house of a certain Don Hilario, and request *sumerced* to send some bottles of wine.

"Say it is for *me*, Juan," added our guest, or rather our host, with a marked emphasis on the personal pronoun; "say it is for *me*, and he will be sure to give you the right sort; but *cuida'o!*† Tell him I have some friends with

* Real Habana cigars are so called, though those made at the Royal Manufactories in Spain more properly deserve the *lawful* distinction.

† *Cuidado*—care! meaning be careful. The Andalusians invariably slur over, or altogether omit, the *d* in the final syllable, which

me—English *officers* ; is it not so?" turning interrogatively to us, " and that half a dozen bottles will not be too many."

Juan took his departure with a knowing glance at our friend, and in less than the "*fumar de un cigarro*,"* returned with the wine. It was excellent—the real " Sherris sack." Bottle after bottle was drained, and every draught of the "fertile" liquor seemed, in the words of Shakspeare's doughty knight, to have a "two-fold operation" upon our convivial entertainer ; "drying him up the crudy vapours" that environed his suspicious brain concerning us, and rendering him extremely communicative respecting his own affairs : so that long before even the second bottle was emptied, he had pronounced us to be *gente* with whom he saw he could converse "*con toda confianza*,"† and had awakened much curiosity on our parts, with regard to himself.

forms the past participle of most of the Spanish verbs. I once heard of a dispute between an Irish and a Scotch soldier, touching the *true* pronunciation of the name, *Badajos*,—one maintaining that it was *Bi Jadus*, the other *Baddyhose*. The question was finally referred to an Andaluz contrabandista in company to decide. The Spaniard, after gravely listening to both modes, declared that, of the two, Sandy's was the nearer approach to the *real Castillian*, which he pronounced to be *Ba'jos*, Anglice *Bah-hose*.

* The smoking of a cigar.

† With perfect confidence—and it is astonishing and highly flattering to our national character what confidence all Spaniards place in us on a very slight acquaintance. A remarkable instance of this occurred to my friend Budgen (whose name I have once before taken the liberty of mentioning in these pages), when returning home alone one

Although he had appeared to us to be on a friendly footing with the officers of Carbineers, he now abused them in most unmeasured terms ; asking if they had not evinced very impertinent curiosity, (how much sooner are the faults of others seen than our own !) to know all about our movements. “ Those *alacranes*,”* said he, “ are all traitors to their country, enemies to our glorious charter of liberty, and—whatever professions they may make to the contrary—have as little liking for a free-born Englishman as Sancho Panza had for unadulterated water.” “ Indeed,” we replied ;—truly enough, though

afternoon, from shooting in the Almoraima forest. A well dressed and well mounted Spaniard, who had trotted past and eyed him very hard several times, addressing some common-place observation to him on each occasion, at length, having ascertained to his satisfaction that, in spite of a half Spanish costume, he was an Englishman, reined his horse up alongside, and said he had a particular favour to ask. “ It is granted, if in my power,” was the reply. “ I have here, then,” added the Spaniard, “ a number of doubloons,” mentioning a very considerable sum, “ which I want to smuggle into *La Plaza*, for the purchase of various goods. Your person will not be examined by the custom-house officers at the *Lines*, whereas mine is sure to be. Will you, therefore, oblige me by carrying them in for me, and lodging them at the house of ——— and Co. ?” “ Did you ever *see* me before,” demanded my astonished friend, “ that you ask me to do this ?” “ No,” replied the other ; “ but I *see you are an Englishman*.” Thanking him for the compliment paid to the national character by this proof of trust, our countryman added, that he must nevertheless decline doing what was asked of him, as the confidence shown by the Spanish government in suffering Englishmen to pass into Gibraltar without examination would be badly returned by such an act. The Spaniard (fully appreciating the high sense of honour that dictated this answer) expressed a hope that he had not given offence, wished him good day, and rode forward.

* Scorpions.

somewhat jesuitically perhaps, wishing to draw him out ;—truly, “ from some observations they let fall, it is evident they are no great admirers of the present constitutional government.” “ Admirers !” he exclaimed ; “ no, indeed, it brings them down to their proper level. But, *carajo!* if I had my way I would bring them down something lower ; for I ’d shoot every mother’s son of them, without the benefit of a dying confession. I ’ll tell you how *I* would set about establishing a constitutional government, *caballeros*. I would first hang up the king ; then give the *garrote* to all your dukes, marquisses, and *condes* ; and lastly, to make things sure, root every bishop, priest, *cura*, and *fraile*, out of their snug hiding-places. That would be——” “ But your religion ?” interrupted we. “ *Qu...e Religion! disparate!** That would be the way to keep the French on their own side the Pyrenees ! But let them come ! they will find us ready to receive and able to beat them, in spite of the defection of our dastardly nobles. As for these carbineer officers, they are a set of *fanfarrones*, who are only fit to *pavonearse por las calles*.† I have done more service to my country than the whole of them put together.

* “ *What about Religion? stuff!*” Many of my readers may suppose, that this sanguinary and summary mode of establishing a constitutional government is an *original* project of my own, put into the mouth of *Tio Blas* ; but I can assure them it is *word for word* a *translation*.

† To strut the streets like peacocks.

Look here," he added, removing the handkerchief bound across his forehead,* and exhibiting a formidable scar; "this was not obtained in a brothel brawl; nor this," showing a mutilated hand. "No, no, caballeros, my skin would not serve to carry wine in."

"You have seen much service then," we observed.—"Wherever any was to be seen," he replied. A fresh supply of cigars was brought, another cork drawn, and before the bottle was finished, we had persuaded our visitor to give us his whole history.

The narration occupied the best part of the night, and will consequently require a proportionate space in these pages. Not therefore to detain my readers in a miserable country venta, and break the thread of my journey, I will reserve it for future chapters, concluding this with a brief description of the remaining portion of the road between Granada and Cordoba.

We left Castrò at dawn, (minus the curb chains, valise straps, and divers other little detachable articles of our equipment, which are serviceable to cavalry soldiers); taking leave of our new acquaintance, who, though he had impressed us with no great feeling of admiration for his character or principles, had, nevertheless, greatly interested us by the narration of his adventures.

* The Andalusian peasants usually wear a handkerchief round the head, under the *sombrero*, to absorb the perspiration.

The road to Cordoba is dreary in the extreme ; being principally across extensive plains of pasture, uninterrupted by a single tree, uncheered by a solitary cottage, or even *rancha*, and after leaving the banks of the *Guadajoz*, unrefreshed by a single drop of water. It does not, however, leave the river immediately on quitting Castrò ; on the contrary, so eccentrically does the stream wind, that it is twice crossed (by fords) within a very short distance of the town, and then continues for a considerable distance along its right bank. Indeed, until arrived within a league and a half of Cordoba, the road does not altogether lose sight of the winding river.

The quality of the route depends upon the season. In summer it is *carriageable* ;* in winter, knee-deep in mud, and liable to be flooded. The distance between the two towns is reckoned six *leguas regulares*, i. e. about 24 miles.

On reaching some high table land, about five miles from Cordoba, the glorious capital of the western caliphs, and the splendid valley of the Guadalquivir, first burst upon the sight. The view is less extensive, perhaps, but far more striking than that on approaching Granada from Alhama ; and when arrived at the

* In England the state of the roads is such, as to enable us to dispense with an adjective signifying *passable* for a carriage ; the Spaniards have not an equally good excuse for this deficiency in their vocabulary : I venture therefore to translate the expressive Italian word *carrozzabile*.

edge of the range of hills bordering the rich valley, it becomes perfectly enchanting. The bright city, with its venerable cathedral, its Moorish bridge, its castle and royal palace, is offered to the spectator's close inspection. The gracefully winding Guadalquivir, bathing its mouldering walls, may be traced for miles along the spacious plain that stretches to the East ; its flat and fertile banks covered with the varied foliage of the olive, pomegranate, and citron. Beyond the city, a range of wooded mountains, studded with numerous *cortijos*, convents, and *quintas*, rises abruptly from the plain ; presenting a fine relief to the sun-lit edifices of the city ; and behind this, again, successive ranges of wild mountains show themselves, terminating at length in the cloud-capped ridge of the *Sierra Morena*.

CHAPTER XIII.

BLAS EL GUERRILLERO.

A BANDIT'S STORY.

“La murmuracion, como Hija natural del odio y de la envidia, siempre anda procurando como manchar y esclarecer las vidas y virtudes ajenas. Y assi en la gente de condicion vil y baja, es la salsa de mayor apetito, sin quien alguna viando no tiene buen gusto, ni està sazonada.”

“ GUZMAN DE ALFARACHE.”

THE tale which occupies this and the succeeding chapters interested us, however unworthily, so deeply, that the following day—whilst its details, as well as the peculiar phrases of the narrator, were yet fresh in our memories—was chiefly devoted to transmitting them to our journals, in as regular order as the case would admit of. By a strange coincidence, however, (which will be noted in the course of my wanderings) an opportunity was some years afterwards afforded me of revising and correcting

my MS. under the eye of the hero of the tale himself; who, besides adding many minor details that had escaped our recollection, explained various circumstances which had struck us as somewhat obscure and unaccountable.

I leave the tale, however, so far in its original state, as to make our acquaintance himself relate

THE ADVENTURES OF BLAS EL GUERRILLERO,

Who, having first carefully examined the outer apartment, which was used as a kind of granary, and then closed the door of that we occupied, thus commenced his story.

My name, *caballeros*, is Blas Maldonado; my present office, that of *Corregidor** of the neighbouring town of ——.† The place of my birth was M——, a small *pueblo*‡ on the other side of the *Serranía de Ronda*, of which my father and mother were natives.

I believe, notwithstanding the somewhat Italian sound of my *apellido*,§ that there is a tolerable proportion of the red blood of the Moors in my veins, and that my name is corrupted from the Arabic.

My parents were both of respectable, though

* Chief magistrate of a town, who is never a native of the place.

† The names of these places, though communicated to me in the first instance, are now withheld, at the narrator's particular request.

‡ Something between a town and a village.

§ Surname.

humble, birth, and owned a small *pacienda* in the vicinity of Utrera, which, from time immemorial, had been in possession of my mother's family. Devoid alike of pride, education, and ambition, they lived in monotonous contentment on the proceeds of their miserable farm, which I, as their only child who had reached maturity, was destined to inherit.

I was beloved by my parents, but especially by my mother, with the most unbounded affection ; and from my earliest youth was accustomed to have every wish gratified, every whim indulged. As I advanced in years, I soon showed that I possessed a spirit which soared above the pruning of vines and gathering of olives ; and my kind mother checked not this rising ambition ; for, though unaspiring herself, she was anxious that her child should be distinguished above the common herd of mankind. My father, however, was desirous of bringing me up to the occupation of my forefathers ; saying to my mother, that they themselves had always been happy in the state to which it had pleased their maker to call them ;—a condition which, if humble, was one of independence, and placed them, in point of worldly wealth, above the most part of their associates ; and that, if they consulted their child's welfare, they should not bring him up above his calling ; for he would only thereby lose the friendship and es-

teem of his neighbours, without increasing their respect ; and might, by idleness and pride, be led to his perdition here and hereafter.

These old-fashioned notions were fortunately overruled ; though I must needs confess, that in the early part of my career, I often thought my father had been endowed with the gift of prophecy. My more tender-hearted parent declared, that I had a mind above the direction of a plough, even if my bodily frame had been strong enough to bear the fatigue of a life of labour ; and closing her arguments with a flood of tears, she reminded my father of the children they had lost in early life, and begged that I, their last hope, might not also be sacrificed.

I was accordingly sent to Seville, to be educated for the church ; that being the only profession my well-intentioned father would hear of my embracing. My fond mother paid me constant visits, to convince herself that my health was not suffering from too close an application to study ; supplying me with money saved by her household economy, to enable me to purchase books, and whatever else I might stand in need of. Her fears were not perhaps so groundless as, judging from my present strength and health, you might imagine ; for, following the natural bent of my inclination, a thirst for knowledge, I gave up the whole of my time to reading ; despising the amusements of

my schoolfellows, to whom I felt myself as superior in intellect, as they prided themselves on being in the accidental matter of birth.

I soon, however, wearied of the lives of the saints, and other good books placed in my hands ; and leaving them for such as wished to learn how to merit canonization, I sought for more worldly knowledge in the pages of Guzman de Alfarache, Gil Blas, and other adventurers, who, like myself, had had their fortunes to seek ; and, whilst I considered the last-named *hero* a mere driveller, devoid of all honourable ambition, I adopted his code of morality, as the only one to be followed by one who has to push his way through the selfish crowd that throngs every avenue to wealth and power.

My parents, informed by those to whose care I was entrusted, that I was by no means likely to become an ornament to the church, were at length persuaded to allow me to make trial of the law. But though at the outset I applied very diligently to the dry study to which my mind was now directed, yet I soon found it suited my taste as little as that of divinity. Of the two, indeed, I think I preferred the lives of the Holy Fathers to the *Siete Partidas* of *Alfonzo el Sabio* ; for the former, at all events, contained ample matter for satire and ridicule, for which I had a natural turn ; whereas the latter formed a mass of heavy reading, replete

with incongruities, and clogged with technicalities, which ill-suited my peculiar humour.

During the latter years of my residence at Seville, however, my reading was altogether diverted into another channel. I became acquainted with a French youth, by name Louis Xavier le Bas, who, intended for the mercantile profession, had been sent to our commercial capital, where some of his mother's relatives were settled, for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of the Spanish language.

Though this person was several years my senior in age, a similarity of tastes soon warmed into the closest friendship an acquaintance that had been commenced merely with a view to our mutual advantage. I initiated him in all the mysteries of Spanish life, and he, in return, undertook *à me décrasser*, as he termed it, and render me fit to *jouer un rôle distingué* on the theatre of the world. In short, we became inseparable; and our despised and despising fellow-students thence designated us Don Cleofas and Asmodeus.

This valuable friend, devil or not, was the means of my acquiring a tolerable knowledge of the French language, (which has proved of infinite service to me,) and of my understanding being enlarged by the writings of Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet, and other enlightened materialists of his nation, whose depth of reasoning

and witty satires were, at that period, effecting such beneficial changes in France; removing from the eyes of the *people* the bandages of ignorance and bigotry that had so long blinded them to their state of slavery and debasement.

These works, though forbidden by the despot government of Spain, were surreptitiously obtained for me by my kind friend; and their perusal opened my eyes also to the deplorable state of degradation in which my own country was plunged. I accordingly became a philosopher, and, I may say, even a *liberal*, long before the term was heard or understood in this enslaved and priest-ridden land.

Our school companions, unable to comprehend the elevated principles by which we were governed, shunned us as plebeian democrats and blasphemous free thinkers. But we soon collected around us a set of more congenial spirits, and became the founders of a secret political association, that has since spread widely throughout the whole kingdom.

I had nearly completed the fifth year of my sojourn at Seville, when an unwelcome summons from my father bade me repair forthwith to M——. His letter briefly stated, that, concluding I must by this time have thoroughly digested the contents of *all* the law books ever published in the universe—my father, as you may perceive, was very ignorant in such matters—

he had embraced a most favourable opportunity that presented itself of establishing me in the world agreeably to my desire ; and, accordingly, was about to place me, together with a handsome bonus, in the hands of Don Benito Quisquilla, the village attorney, to be by him initiated into all the practical quirks and chicaneries of the law ; with the view, if I gave promise of becoming a useful co-operator in the work of litigation, of being eventually admitted to a share of his daily increasing profits.

This prospect of settling down as a country attorney was, as my friend and counsellor Le Bas said, quite insufferable to one of my intellectual powers, cultivated mind, and honourable ambition. If I had finally determined on following the profession of the law, he observed, the only fit field for one of my abilities was the capital. *There*, he had no doubt, I should soon rise to distinction ; whereas, in a country town, my pursuit of fame would be as vain as that of partridges *en campo raso*.*

This opinion tallied exactly with my own ; for, feeling myself as superior in mental endowments as in physical powers to the decrepit piece of nobility who owned the vast plains surrounding the miserable inheritance to which I was born, I saw no reason why I should be inferior to him in worldly wealth and considera-

* In an open country.

tion. With these and various other arguments, therefore, I replied to my father, urging him to break off with Don Benito, and furnish me with the means of accompanying my friend, Le Bas, to Madrid, where he was about to establish himself as a merchant. My father, however, would not listen to reason. He replied, that the Duke of Medina Celi was born a grandee of Spain, and I a peasant; and, with respect to a reflection I had cast upon the justice of Providence in distributing so unequally the good things of this world, he maintained that, though my life was doomed to be one of labour, yet it was as sweet, probably even sweeter, than that of him whose lot I seemed so much to envy.

Finding that it was *predicar en el desierto** to argue with my father, and that my mother did not give me the support on which I had reckoned, I had no alternative but to acquiesce in the proposed plan, and wait for the favourable moment of relieving myself from the paternal yoke. I, therefore, took a most affectionate leave of Le Bas, who promised to summons me to the capital as soon as he had an opportunity of serying me, and, with a very bad grace, obeying my father's commands, proceeded to M_____.

My parents were delighted with the improvements that had taken place in my health, per-

* To preach in the desert.

son, and deportment, and not less proud of the superiority my education and accomplishments had given me over the companions of my childhood. I was now, my fond mother declared, entitled to *llamar de vos** the first *hidalgo* in the land ; and, I believe, *Caballeros*, that, without vanity, I may say, my coming caused some little sensation in my natal town.

I was not long in discovering, however, that the place contained no fit associate for one of my stamp. Those few amongst the inhabitants whose professions had rendered some little education necessary, were, from morning to night, occupied at their respective vocations, and affected rather to treat me as a *parvenu*. The youths of my own age, on the other hand, were ignorant clowns, of whom I could not possibly make companions ; and, with pain I make the admission, even on the authors of my being I could not now avoid looking down with some slight feeling of contempt. They were all kindness, however, and my father spared not the means of enabling me to continue the same expensive manner of life to which I had so long been accustomed.

Deprived as I now found myself of associates of my own sex—for I believe every boor in the place hated me most thoroughly—my time was exclusively devoted to the society of the other ;

* Address as *you*.

and I need not, therefore, tell you—for most young men are aware of the expenses attendant on such intimacies—that my father's purse was drawn heavily upon to meet my increasing exigencies.

Meanwhile my legal studies were prosecuted with no great assiduity. Don Benito, who, whilst my father's money was fresh in his pocket, had, for the sake of appearances, treated me with affected kindness, soon threw off the mask of hypocrisy, and neglected no occasion of making me aware of the little interest he took in my welfare. The soft and speaking eyes of his fair daughter told me, however, that she entertained a kindlier feeling towards me; an avowal which was quickly followed by the admission that I was the sole possessor of her affections.

I must make the ungallant confession, *Caballeros*, that *expediency* was the only incentive I had for encouraging the passion of the lovely girl. My life had been too dissolute to admit so pure an affection as her's readily to take root within my breast; but I saw in it the only sure stepping-stone to greatness—money; for Don Benito was a wealthy man, Alitéa his only daughter.

Whilst yet undecided as to the best means to be adopted for the accomplishment of my purpose (for it was a matter requiring some consi-

deration, since I was perfectly aware the crafty old lawyer would never *consent* to our union, my dissipated mode of living having involved me in pecuniary difficulties of which he could not well be ignorant), events occurred which, by opening other prospects to me, for a time drove Alitéa altogether out of my thoughts.

The trifling sum that my father's frugal habits had enabled him to lay by, had been entirely swallowed up in placing me with Don Benito; and to meet my increasing expenditure, which he fully believed was merely money put out to interest, he conceived that increased exertions on his part were necessary. Against this—since in replying to my mother's objections to my following the plough, he had ever maintained that agricultural pursuits were of all others the most healthy—I could have nothing to say. But these exertions soon proved too much for the old man's strength, and he contracted a painful disorder, from which, after a tedious confinement, it became a mercy to be relieved.

I mention these circumstances, *Caballeros*, not for the purpose of repelling the charge brought against me by my kind fellow-towns-men, of having wilfully accelerated my parent's death, a crime of which, God be praised, my conscience is quite clear, but to show the ill will they entertained towards me; a feeling to

which, in the course of my story, I shall again have occasion to refer.

I had always expected, on the death of my father, to find myself in the possession of a comfortable independence, as he had ever represented to me that such would be the case.

But, during his protracted illness, every thing had gone wrong at the farm: the cattle died; those of our neighbours intruded upon our crops; the vines remained unpruned; the olives rotted upon the ground; the property, in fact, had become a perfect wilderness; and, to obtain money to defray the expenses of my parent's funeral, I was obliged to sell the implements of husbandry upon the farm; those being the only property which could be immediately rendered available.

Before proceeding to this extremity, however, I had applied to Don Benito for assistance. The pettifogging rascal in reply said, that he had every disposition in the world to befriend me, and, with that view, felt called upon to say, that the further study of a profession for which I had neither the requisite talent nor application, would be merely a waste of time and money; and to advise me to apply myself to the healthful occupation of my forefathers, for which, on the other hand, my bodily strength peculiarly fitted me. "On this condition only," he concluded, "can I render you assistance.

Give me your promise to devote your best energies to this honest calling, and I am ready at once to return the sum advanced by your father, though not called upon to do so, either by law or equity."

I spurned his offer with the contemptuous indignation it merited, withdrew from all further intercourse with the miserly wretch, and, as I have already said, sold every thing that I could lay my hands upon.

Could I have acted otherwise? impossible! But the blow inflicted on my mother by this sudden destruction of her long-indulged hopes was too heavy for her to bear up against. Staggering already under her late loss, and now with the dread of penury and want added to her sufferings, she sank broken-hearted to the grave.

I can ill describe my feelings on the heart-rending occasion. I had loved my mother with the fondest affection; yet had it been my *fate* to drug the cup that agonised her last moments! With pleasure would I have laid down my own life to prolong her's; yet had it been my unlucky destiny to inflict the blow that hurried her to the tomb! She nevertheless felt more for me than for herself, even in her last moments; and her dying breath was spent in calling down a blessing on my head. *Ya està en el cielo.**

* She is now in heaven.

To meet the fresh expenses my mother's illness and death had brought upon me, as well as to liquidate my former debts, I was now under the necessity of raising more money. I tried in vain to effect a mortgage on my property: nobody would advance a *maravedi* upon it! To obtain a few paltry doubloons, therefore, I had no alternative left but to sell the patrimony handed down to me by a long line of ancestors. My *hacienda* was accordingly put up to public auction; and—deteriorated in value as it was represented to be, by every one but the auctioneer—sold for something less than one third of its real value. The purchaser was Don Benito Quisquilla.

The proceeds of the sale, after paying the customary expenses, were barely sufficient to satisfy the various demands made upon me; and I was left a bankrupt in wealth as well as expectations; a being without a relative in the wide world to speak comfort to him; without a friend to advise him; without a home; without even the means of subsistence!

Was life any longer worth preserving? I weighed its value in the scales of experience—fleeting joys on the one side, rankling injuries on the other; and the preponderating weight of the latter had well nigh determined me to rid myself of the burthen of existence, when the sweetness of revenge, cast into the opposing

balance, turned the scale, and decided me to live — to live to be revenged on *mankind*.

The purchaser of my property, or rather the swindler who had obtained possession of it, again outraged my wounded feelings by the repetition of his humiliating offer of assistance. Thus insulted and scorned by the specious villain whose robberies had rendered me a beggar, I swore to let fall on him the first stroke of my revenge. I kept my oath! I tore from his arms his daughter, his darling Alitéa—the solace of his widowed hearth—the prop of his declining years. She fled from the paternal roof, and became my — mistress!

Ignorant of all that had passed between her father and myself, and but too ready to lend a favouring ear to my tale, few persuasions were necessary to induce Alitéa to comply with my proposal. I assured her that I had sounded Don Benito on the subject of a marriage, and that he objected only on account of the disparity of years: she who was then entering her twenty-third year, being two years older than myself. But as this objection, trifling as it could not but be considered, was nevertheless one which would always exist, I convinced her that it could only be overcome by the step I proposed, a step which would readily be forgiven by an indulgent father. She trusted to my honour and her father's kindness, and became my victim.

We fled to the mountains, and sought a refuge amongst the lawless bandits of Olbera, a place proverbial for sheltering the outcasts of society. There we remained for several months, subsisting on the few *onzas* that remained in my purse from the sale of my patrimony, and by disposing of various trinkets that Alitéa had brought away with her. But our funds were soon exhausted, and it became necessary to take some steps to procure the means of maintenance.

On matters reaching this stage, it had originally been my intention to abandon Don Benito's daughter to her fate, and seek my fortune in America; for, as I have already said, Alitéa had awakened no feeling of love within my breast, and the idea of making her my wife, though entertained previous to my rupture with her father, had never once entered my thoughts on taking her from the paternal roof. Revenge alone had instigated me to an act, by which I purposed bringing everlasting disgrace on Don Benito, and his vaunted high connexions.

But, besides that Alitéa possessed great personal attractions, and had given proof of loving me with the most boundless affection, which naturally disposed my feelings to warm towards her, she, even now, on discovering the deceit I had practised; that I was a libertine; a beggar; nay, even when I told her she was the mere

instrument of my revenge, did not reproach me with one bitter word.—“Blas, Blas, I trust to your honour,” was the only appeal made to her seducer’s feelings.

Was it in human nature to spurn so confiding, so affectionate a being? For my *punishment* (so a confessor would, probably, have told me) it was ordained, that the cold admiration with which I first regarded Alitéa should gradually warm into the most fervent, the most ardent love, to make me feel more poignantly the wrong I had done, the misery I had brought on this admirable being!

Bitterly as I upbraided *fate*, and curst the author of my misfortunes, more bitter still were my self-reproaches at having exposed the object of my adoration to the hardships and privations we were doomed to suffer; for we were now obliged to labour from daylight to dark to earn a miserable pittance, barely sufficient to procure the necessaries of life, and to be satisfied with the humblest lodging, the coarsest garments, and the poorest food.

At length, urged by my love for Alitéa, and yet more by the prospect of a family, I determined on opening a communication with Don Benito, which I did by proposing to marry his daughter, and thus save the blighted honour of her family. This proposal was, of course, coupled with a stipulation — for it was now my

turn to dictate terms — that a handsome settlement should be made upon us.

The medium I selected for carrying on this delicate negociation was one of the villagers, a smuggler, with whom I had become intimate, and whose avocation afforded the opportunity of communicating with Don Benito, without furnishing a clue, by which our place of concealment could be discovered. On the fidelity of my friend—having exacted a promise of the most inviolable secrecy—I thought the fullest reliance might be placed ; but “ honour and profit will not both keep in one sack,” as the saying is. The scoundrel had not enough virtue to resist a bribe of a few dollars, and he acquainted Don Benito with every thing concerning us.

This abominable piece of treachery, whilst it served to increase the hatred I bore mankind, had a considerable influence in stamping my future character, for I became habitually wary and distrustful. But, to resume my narrative, on returning one evening from my daily work, I found Don Benito at my Alitéa’s bed-side, and that she had prematurely given birth to a male child — an *illegitimate* child.

I pass over the scene of mutual recrimination that ensued. What might have happened, but for the precarious state in which Alitéa was lying, I know not. Enraged beyond measure

at the circumstance, which, for the moment, had caused the failure of his project to recover his daughter, Don Benito took his departure, calling down upon me every possible malediction, and declaring to the village authorities his firm resolve to return without loss of time, armed with power to lodge me in a gaol, and place his daughter in a convent; but I baulked his purpose, by making Alitéa my wife that very night. Her father had dropped his purse upon the floor, and I scrupled not to employ its contents in so legitimate a purpose.

I soon found an obsequious priest, ready to do my bidding. They are not over-scrupulous in religious matters at Olbera, neither are the laws very rigidly enforced there*; so that on my *father-in-law's* return, a few days after, with the *justicia*, I set him at defiance.

I had, some time previously, made up my mind to perform this tardy act of justice to my Alitéa, but had delayed it with the view of exacting favourable terms from her father, who, I thought, as our Spanish saying has it, would rather see *La hija mal casada que bien abar-raganada*.† Having failed in this, it became necessary to marry her for my own sake; since, though Don Benito might still send me to

* It is a common saying amongst the *Serranos*, “ Kill your man, and fly to Olbera for safety.”

† The daughter badly married than well maintained.

prison, I could now insist on my *wife* accompanying me.

He was outrageous on finding that his revengeful intention was thwarted ; but, seeing that menaces had no effect upon me, changed his tone, and proposed that I should resign his daughter for a sum of money. This I resolutely declined, whilst Alitéa, on her knees, implored his forgiveness. How the monster could refuse I know not ; but he did, and they parted, to meet no more.

A few days after this scene, a letter was delivered to Alitéa from her unnatural parent. In it, after declaring that he would no longer hold communion with the villain who had brought misery on her, and disgrace on the name she bore, and who, but on her account, he would pursue with the utmost vengeance of the outraged laws of our country, he proceeded to state, that still prompted by the recollection of the unbounded affection he had borne her mother, he had determined to make an allowance sufficient for our bare support, and that a certain sum would, for that purpose, be lodged periodically in the hands of the superior of the convent of *San Pablo de la Breña*, in our vicinity ; where he charged her, if the religious precepts he had implanted in her breast were not entirely eradicated, to make the frequent confessions necessary for the salvation of her

soul. The money indeed, he added, was to be paid only on these conditions, and into her own hands, and so long as he was assured that she experienced proper treatment from me. Convinced, however, he pursued, that I was actuated solely by the vilest of motives, and not influenced by any regard for *her* in refusing to give her up, he once more repeated the offer made at our last interview; or even offered to settle on me alone the sum he purposed to allow us jointly, if I would formally resign his daughter, and allow the marriage to be annulled. In conclusion, he informed her, that though his door would ever be open to admit a repentant daughter, it was closed for ever against that daughter's seducer, and the offspring of our criminality.

My wife perused the letter, and, with a steady countenance, but brimful eye, placed it in my hands. "Well, Alitéa," said I, "will you return to your father and luxury, or remain to share the poverty of your husband? I pledge you my word it shall be as you may choose—decide."—"I have already decided," she replied: "I remain."

I sent a scornful reply to Don Benito's letter, returning, with usurious interest, the opprobrious terms he had lavished upon me. "Villain," indeed, from him who was the source of all my misfortunes!—Nevertheless, he was as

good as his word ; the allowance was regularly paid into the hands of Alitéa ; and, added to the profits arising from the cultivation of a vineyard, it enabled us, without much labour, to live in comfort, if not luxury.

But short, alas ! was this period of happiness ; the cup of life appeared only to have been sweetened for a brief space, to render more bitter the long draught of misery that was in reserve for me. My Alitéa had never entirely recovered from the effects of the shock occasioned by her father's sudden visit ; and, as if fate took pleasure in mocking our tardy marriage, the illegitimate Fernando was doomed to be the only issue that proceeded from it. Suffice it to say, my wife fell at length a victim to her father's rash act, and I was once more alone in the world, and a beggar.

Even now, *Caballeros*, though two-and-thirty years have elapsed since my Alitéa was torn from me, I cannot speak of her loss with composure. Judge then of my frantic rage at the time. In my ungovernable frenzy, I rushed into the open air, to upbraid the Almighty Being who had given me existence ; I invoked his utmost wrath, I defied his utmost power, but in vain ! I was fated to live on, to endure yet greater wretchedness. Fool that I was, to repine at what was written in the book of *Fate* !

I returned to the house of death, to obtain

the means of ridding myself of an existence that I abhorred. I was about to snatch my knife from its sheath to execute my purpose, when, casting my eyes yet once more on my adored Alitéa, I saw my child, my helpless Fernando, extended in violent convulsions at her side. A sense of the duty I owed the dear pledge of my Alitéa's love checked my upraised arm. I determined to live for that boy—that boy thenceforth became my all.

The allowance made by Don Benito was immediately stopped on the death of his daughter, without his condescending even to inquire after her child. It became necessary, therefore, to adopt some course of life better suited to me than that of a field labourer, to earn wherewith to support us ; and I accordingly joined a band of Contrabandistas, and, in the lawless life I thenceforth led, found an occupation well suited to my adventurous, and now reckless disposition.

During several years that I devoted to this precarious profession, I made frequent visits to Cadiz, where my knowledge of the French language threw me in constant communication with the various merchants of that nation, who were, at that period, established there. Amongst these, to my inexpressible delight, I discovered my old friend Le Bas—though now glorying in the virtuous republican appellation of Publius Manlius Niveleur. Our intimacy was, of course,

renewed, and, as he had the means of throwing a great deal of business into my hands, I soon drove a thriving trade. Through him, also, I became *au fait* as to the state of affairs in France, and, consequently, aware of the great benefits that had accrued to the people by the change from a Despotic to a Republican government; and of other events, which our rulers took every possible pains to prevent reaching the ears of the Spanish people.

I am speaking now of as distant an epoch as the year 1796, when France, having emancipated herself from the thraldom of a tyrannical king, a vicious nobility, and a corrupt priesthood, was basking in the sunshine of liberty; —when each had his rights, and was equal to his neighbour. Need I say, *Caballeros*, that I longed for the day to arrive when my own country should be relieved from the ravages of similar birds of prey and devouring locusts?

My early hatred of our abominated tyrants and oppressors had been fostered by numerous persecutions; for, since entering on my new vocation — a vocation made necessary for the *people*, by the infamous monopolies enjoyed by those termed *noble* — I had been twice imprisoned, and no less than three times afterwards relieved from that punishment solely by dint of bribery. Once, also, I had been subjected to a heavy fine for barking trees in a forest, belong-

ing to a worthy brotherhood of *Capuchinos Descalzos* ; — a swarm of lazy drones, who, gaining an easy livelihood by begging impudently from door to door, could ill brook seeing others turn that to account, which, if not neglected by themselves, would render their alms-seeking unnecessary.

However, I had now an excellent business, and money, I calculated, would bring me out of all further difficulties ; for, by this time, I had acquired a knowledge of its value in obtaining immunity for all sorts of crimes. In an unlucky hour, however, I was detected shooting deer in a forest belonging to the *Conde de Aguila* ; and one of the keepers, who owed me a grudge, refused the proffered bribe. The Count himself proved beyond my price, though I made him a handsome offer ; and, affecting great indignation at this attempt to corrupt the pure course of justice, he prosecuted me most vindictively. The consequence was, I was found guilty, and sentenced to ten years' transportation to Ceuta, with chains and hard labour.

Who will deny that these things called for a change in the institutions of my country ? Was the luxury of tobacco to be placed beyond the reach of the peasant, whilst the noble *con pierna tendida** spent his whole life involved in a cloud of smoke ? Was the industrious

* Literally, with outstretched foot—at his ease.

husbandman to be contented with rags and tatters, whilst lazy priests were clothed in silks and brocade? And, surely, even if the neglected bark of the forest trees was sacred, the wild beasts, that sheltered in that forest, were the property of all!

The most severe pang the banishment from my native land caused me, was the separation from my beloved Fernando, at that time a boy of eight years old. During my frequent short absences from home, I had always left him in charge of an old crone, the widow of one of our gang, and receiver of our smuggled cargoes. But I dreaded lest, on the news of my sentence reaching her ears, she should send my poor boy adrift to beg his bread—perhaps, to starve—in this wide, uncharitable world.

For the ten long years that I was doomed to exile, did this dread weigh upon me yet heavier than the chains that bound me to my task. I constantly wrote, and sent repeated messages by convicts returning to our native land, at the expiration of their term of punishment, and who invariably promised to inform me of the result of their inquiries; but never did any tidings of my boy arrive, to cheer me in my tedious captivity!

The day of my release at length arrived; the shackles were struck from my emaciated limbs; and, ere I left the African shore, I registered a

vow—which has been most truly kept—that the tyrants should rue the day on which Blas Maldonado had been condemned to labour like a highway robber, or midnight assassin.

I seized the first opportunity of proceeding to Gibraltar. Had the means of quitting the sea-girt prison* not quickly presented itself, I verily believe I should have attempted to swim across the wide channel that separated me from my country, so painful had my restraint become. The communication with the English fortress was then open. On landing there, I learnt that our imbecile old king and his hopeful son had both been persuaded to leave their country; which, distracted by parties, and without a government, was at the mercy of an ambitious priesthood, and an ignorant, perfidious nobility.

The opportunity of wreaking vengeance on my oppressors was most favourable. I hastened first, however, to Olbera, to obtain tidings of my son—my long estranged Fernando. Alas! no one could give me any information concerning him. The *Tia Dorotea*, in whose charge I had left him, had been dead several years; but the boy had, “it was said,” absconded from her, long before her death. It was not a matter to interest the savages who had been my associ-

* I can fancy some hypercritical persons quarrelling with this expression of the worthy Señor Blas; since Ceuta is not actually an island. But it is cut off from the main land by so wide a salt water ditch, that I think he was almost warranted in using the word sea-girt.

ates. I cursed them all from the bottom of my heart, and proceeded on to M——.

My inquiries there were not more successful. Don Benito had long since left the place, and no one could, or *would*, give me any information concerning my son. I included the whole population in my sweeping malediction, and, with a heart panting for revenge, proceeded to Seville, where I had ascertained that one of my oppressors, at all events, was within reach of my knife.

Reckless of life, and fearless of consequences; with a ready flow of words, and a breast full of wrongs, I soon acquired an extraordinary ascendancy over the ignorant and volatile mob of that turbulent city. A riot was the consequence; and by the knife of *one of those* engaged in it, fell the Conde de Aguila !

For some months after this I went about exciting feelings of distrust against the nobility, and of hatred against the hypocritical monks, that eat up the produce of our fertile fields. But the battle of Beylen having again restored, in some measure, the influence of these rapacious vultures, I was arrested as a seditious person, on information lodged by one of my own followers. A mockery of justice took place in the way of a trial; I was found guilty, and sentenced to death.

The day of my execution was fixed; but I

had a purse full of money, and managed to escape from the place allotted for my prison ; and thinking that the constitution at this period, promulgated by the intrusive king, held out great promise of relieving my unhappy country from its state of degradation—as well by opening all professions to every *class* of Spaniards as by making promotion the reward of merit—I determined to seek distinction in the ranks of our liberators. Accordingly, I proceeded to the north of Spain, and joined the French army at the moment it was about to resume offensive operations on the banks of the Ebro.

My acquaintance with the invaders' language made me a valuable recruit, and I was attached as an orderly and interpreter to General —.

With all my wrongs fresh rankling in my breast, I burned to bathe my sword in the blood of my base countrymen, fighting in the ranks of slavery and despotism. And too soon, alas ! was the opportunity afforded me.

The first operations of the French army, in the campaign which now opened, were crowned with the most brilliant success. Army after army disappeared before them, like chaff before the wind. A last effort to resist the invaders was made by Palafox and Castaños, in the plains of Tudela; and here, again, I drew my sword for those whom I hoped were to be the liberators of my country.

I need not describe more of that scene of slaughter than is necessary for my tale. The Arragones, posted on the Spanish right, shamefully abandoned their position, after a feeble resistance. The gallant old Castaños flew to the left, where the Andalusian troops, whom he had led to victory at Baylen, were stationed, and attempted to restore the battle ; but his efforts were vain ; all he could effect was to withdraw this wing of his panic-struck army with some kind of order.

It is impossible for me to describe the irresistible thirst for blood which impelled me forward on that fatal day. I have since—as you will hear in the sequel—fought against these very French, whose bread I was then eating ; but never was my sword edged with the same temper that now sharpened it. The moment of revenge had, I conceived, at length arrived—the long invoked opportunity of wreaking vengeance on my perfidious, abject countrymen. I thought of my wife, hurried to an untimely grave—of my child, left to perish for want—of my ignominious chains and treacherous associates ; and I became frantic with rage.

I had quitted the side of my general, whose division was posted towards the centre of the line, that I might be opposed to the vile *espada-chines* of my native province. I arrived at the moment that the general confusion was spread-

ing amongst their ranks ; and, seizing a lance from a Frenchman, who fell wounded at my side, I rushed impetuously upon my flying countrymen. Trampling down the common herd, for others who came after me to despatch, I pushed madly forward in pursuit of nobler game, and marked as my victim a young cavalry officer, who was vainly endeavouring to rally his fugitive troopers. I rode at him with my lance *en joue*, and, being an able *toreador*, had little fears of the result of the contest, though he awaited my onset with perfect self-possession. Before I came within his reach, however, he was struck from his horse by a musket-ball, and fell, apparently lifeless, at my feet.

I do not know what prompted me—certainly not the love of gold, for at that moment my thoughts were bent entirely on blood—not a feeling of mercy, for that was yet further from my mind than wealth ; but some unaccountable impulse, perhaps the agency of the devil, persuaded me to alight, and strip the youth of his bright gold epaulettes.

I found that he had been shot in the head, the ball having entered at one eye, and seemingly passed out at the other. His face was suffused with gore, but he was not dead.

I was about to finish his short career with a thrust of my lance, when it struck me it would be less merciful to allow the blind wretch to eke out his miserable existence. Stripping him,

therefore, of his epaulettes, " You may live, young *hidalgo*," said I, " unless you are lucky enough to find some Frenchman more charitably disposed towards you than myself. You will yet serve for an *espantajo*!" *

" What ! " exclaimed the youth, " is it a Spaniard who pillages a dying countryman ? Is it a vile renegade that taunts me with the disfigurement of an honourable wound ? Then may my dying curse be upon him ; may it ring perpetually in his ears, as a foretaste of torments to be endured, should my arm fail in sending him at once to eternal punishment ! "

So saying, he snatched a pistol from his breast, and, ere I could arrest his hand, fired in the direction he judged me to be. The ball — would it had been more surely aimed ! — merely grazed my left cheek, leaving the mark you may see through my bushy whisker.

Provoked beyond endurance by this act, I seized my adversary by the throat, and, forcing my knife into his mouth, cut out the tongue that had so lately cursed me ; and then, after watching some moments the wreathings of my tortured victim, sheathed it in his breast.

I felt in so doing that it had struck against something hard — I thought, perhaps, a watch ; and, tearing open his jacket, discovered, oh God ! — that I was the murderer of my son !

* Scarecrow.

CHAPTER XIV.

BLAS EL GUERRILLERO — *continued.*

THE worthy Señor Blas having quaffed a bumper of *Xeres seco*, by way of drowning his sorrow, thus continued his story :—

I fell senseless on the mangled corpse of my beloved Fernando. How long I remained in this state I know not, but I was aroused by the jeers of some French soldiers, who, tearing me rudely from the now cold body of my son, asked if I had fairly earned my compatriot's epaulettes ; at the same time very unceremoniously transferring them from my sash, into which I had hastily thrust them, to their own havresacks.

I offered no resistance ; but, when they were about to rob me as unceremoniously of the chain and locket, proofs of my son's identity, which my damp and blood-stained hand yet held in its convulsive grasp, I checked their insolence by a look at my gory knife, taking at

the same time from my breast, and throwing towards them, the *carte de protection* of their general. They passed on, carrying off the epaulettes, and laughing at and mimicking the grief and anger depicted in my countenance.

I was again awakened to a sense of my misfortunes. At first I tried to fancy it was all a dream ; then, that I might still be mistaken in the locket of my departed Alitéa ; but a pocket-book, which, on further search, I discovered on the person of my ill-fated son, established the appalling fact, beyond the possibility of doubt.

I hastily dug a grave for my boy, but, ere returning the corse to its native clay, I vowed to revenge his death upon the heartless foreigners, who, having led me to commit this crime, and brought a dying curse upon my head, had scoffed at my grief and misery. I accordingly took the first opportunity of quitting the French army, and falling in with a gang of lawless freebooters, who, under the pretext of fighting the enemies of their country, robbed and plundered indiscriminately friend and foe, I enlisted, a willing recruit, into the *quadrilla*.*

In the matter of plunder, I believe that the *best* of the *guerrilla* bands, which now began to be formed throughout the country, were as little scrupulous as that of which I became a

* Band.

member, though they had not the honesty to admit it. Many, certainly, were the acts of atrocity committed by our band. We scoured the whole of Old Castile and Leon, levying contributions wherever we moved; we hung upon the flank of the English army in its retreat to Coruña, filling our pockets with doubloons, and our pouches with ammunition; we slaughtered any luckless, wearied, or wounded French straggler that came across our path, but sought not for opportunities of exchanging shots with our invaders.

In this latter respect, the plan of our leader was too timid for me, and I sometimes managed to join the red-coats in a skirmish with the common enemy. On one of these occasions my life was saved by one of your countrymen. From that day I have known how to value an Englishman, and have never neglected an opportunity of evincing my gratitude to the fellow-countrymen of my brave deliverer.

I had straggled away from our *quadrilla*, accompanied by two of my comrades, to take part in a skirmish which was going on at the passage of a small river, between the rear-guard of the English and their pursuing enemies. The object in view was, of course, merely to retard the advance of the French; since your army was in full retreat; and just as the signal was given for the skirmishers to retire, I received a carbine

ball in my thigh which unhorsed me. My frightened charger galloped off, as did also my two companions, leaving me to the tender mercies of the advancing enemy. One of your countrymen happened, however, to look round, and seeing me doomed to destruction, though doing my best to hobble off, rode back amidst a shower of bullets to render me assistance. "John," said he, "you're a brave fellow ; give me your hand and jump up behind me." I did the first part of his bidding ; but whilst in the act of climbing up in obedience to the second, a shot disabled his left arm. The gallant lad immediately seized me with his right hand, by the help of which I scrambled on his horse's back, when another shot brought him to the ground. Poor fellow ! one groan alone escaped him. I was obliged to fly, but did not do so until I had convinced myself that his life was extinct.

My own wound was but slight; and soon after this affair, thinking your army had thrown away all its treasure, we betook ourselves to the mountains of Asturias, returning along the northern coast of Spain into Navarre, and thence into Catalonia, where we commenced a more decided guerrilla warfare against the enemy; embracing every opportunity of attacking him when *profit* was to be gained without much risk.

I soon distinguished myself above the rest of the quadrilla by my daring and unscrupulous-

ness ; and my influence, particularly amongst the most reckless of the band, increased daily ; so great, indeed, did it become, that the chief and his chosen associates regarded me with extreme jealousy. I was always urging them to leave the north of Spain, where we had numerous competitors in the field, and proceed to the less devastated province of Andalusia ; for I longed for the opportunity of settling my outstanding accounts with divers priests, *alcaldes*, *hidalgos*, and others, for various little acts of *kindness*, shown me during my contrabandista career ; and I was anxious also to pay off a debt of more serious amount, due to Don Benito ; to explain which I must go back a little in my story.

The pocket-book which I had found on the person of my unfortunate Fernando contained several letters addressed to him by Don Benito, from which, together with information they led me to seek by making a short visit to Madrid, I learnt that my son had been removed from the care of *Tia* Dorotea, very soon after my transportation to Ceuta. About the same period, it appeared, Don Benito had been suddenly called to Madrid, from whence he had been sent as *Corregidor* to some town in Galicia.

None of the various letters I wrote to my boy had been permitted to meet his eye ; and to his anxious inquiries after the fate of his convict

father, answer was made, that I had fallen a sacrifice to the unhealthy climate of Africa.

On his removal from Olbera, Fernando had at once been sent to Salamanca for his education, and was yet studying at the celebrated university of that city, when the French invasion called the country to arms. With the enthusiasm natural to youth, he burned to join the ranks of the *Patriots*—as the ill-organized, worse directed, and in too many cases shamefully betrayed bands of peasantry were called—and Don Benito, whom it appeared had conceived a tardy affection for his grandson, had long combated this desire. After vainly attempting, however, to turn him from his purpose; and fearful, probably, by prolonged opposition, of being himself denounced as an *Afrancesado*, he at length acceded to Fernando's wishes, and procured for him a commission in a regiment of cavalry, where he thought he would be less exposed to fatigue and hardships than as a foot-soldier.

My gallant boy, as appeared as well by the letters found upon him, as by a decoration at his breast, had already distinguished himself in the field, when fate directed a father's hand to close his promising career.

Don Benito, I further learned, overwhelmed with grief by the death of his grandson, had retired from Madrid to his native town. There,

clothed with power, I longed to beard him in his fancied security; to tell him that his vile deceit had caused a son to raise his arm against a father—had caused that father, in ignorance, to become the murderer of his son; to tell him, in fine, that all his property, his ill-gotten property—his life even—was at my disposal, to take and destroy as I thought fit. To accomplish this was now the ruling desire within my breast; my country's wrongs were but the pretence for acquiring power amongst my companions.

Esteban, the leader of our *quadrilla*, was an overbearing, avaricious, craven-hearted Catalan, who, fearful of venturing far from his own mountain retreats, resolutely and effectually opposed my project of making a dash at Andalusia. As a first step towards effecting my purpose, therefore, it became necessary to dispose of him.

I have before stated that I had many friends in the troop, and by an assumed generosity,—my share of plunder, unless consisting of arms, horses, &c., being generally left to be divided amongst my comrades,—I gradually succeeded in increasing the number of my adherents; thus paving the way for becoming, one day, the leader of the band. In this I but adopted the maxim of my favourite *Guzman de Alfarache*, who says, “*ganar amigos es dar dinero a logro*

*y sembrar en regadio.”** I valued wealth, however, only as the means of obtaining *power*; and at that moment, to give money was to gain friends, and to gain friends, to attain power.

The friends I gained were very uncertain ones, it may be said. They were such, nevertheless, as I could depend upon whilst fortune favoured me; and what is friendship after all? a flimsy veil thrown over the double face of mutual interest, which the slightest breath of adversity blows aside! a mere footstep to the seat of power, which is trodden upon the moment that seat is gained! Friendship! I have never in my eventful life known it last when once the bond of interest was broken!

Strong, however, as my party had become, by the means I have stated, it was not yet sufficiently so to warrant my coming to an open rupture with Esteban, even had that been advisable. On the contrary, as the band consisted principally of his countrymen, whose services I did not wish to lose, it was desirable, in the step I meditated taking, to avoid even the *suspicion* of treachery. With this view, I arranged a plan with three of my most faithful supporters, which was crowned with complete success.

Esteban had obtained information, that, on a

* To gain friends is to put money out to interest, and sow on irrigated soil.

certain day, a convoy, conveying treasure and ammunition for the use of the French division employed at the siege of Gerona, would be sent from Figueras. The escort, on account of the value of the convoy, would of course be strong; but the avarice of our chief serving as a fillip to his courage, we succeeded in persuading him to make an attempt to capture it. Taking post, therefore, in a deep ravine, situated in the heart of a forest through which the enemy must necessarily pass, a council was called to consider the best mode of making the attack. Contrary to my usual custom, I recommended the adoption of the most cautious proceedings. I hinted that we must have been misinformed respecting the strength of the escort; as, doubtless, so enormous a sum as that the enemy was sending would be protected by a very strong body of troops. In fact, whilst feeding Esteban's cupidity, I succeeded so completely in frightening him, that he asked me to propose a plan for the attack.

I readily acquiesced; and my project meeting with unanimous approval, was immediately acted upon. It was as follows. Two thirds of our force were concealed in a hollow some distance from and to the right of the road, beyond the pass. Their horses were muzzled to prevent detection by their neighing, but were provided with slip knots to release them at a

moment's notice. The rest of the troop took post on foot on the left side of the defilé, immediately over the road, three of the men retiring some distance into the forest with the horses of this party, and keeping them ready to bring up to the spot at the concerted signal.

The first party was placed under the command of the lieutenant of the troop, the bosom friend of Esteban, who, screening his men carefully from observation, was to allow the enemy's advanced guard to pass unmolested until it had gained a comparatively open space clear of the ravine, and then to charge it *à cierra ojos*,* for the purpose of drawing to its support the main body of the escort, and so leave the mules with the treasure but slightly protected. This done, he was to retire, or not, according to circumstances.

Meanwhile, Esteban concealed himself in the thick foliage of an evergreen oak that grew on the summit of an isolated crag, which, standing out from the bank of the hollow way, protruded into and commanded a perfect view of the road. From this elevated spot he was (should he deem it advisable) to make the signal for a general attack by liberating a huge eagle, which we always kept for this purpose; a signal that, instead of exciting suspicion, we found rather tended to throw the enemy off his

* With closed eyes—i. e. without hesitation.

guard. Our rendezvous was given for the night at a village some ten miles from the scene of action.

As much of the detail of these arrangements had been left (out of compliment) to me, I had no difficulty in selecting the *three men* who were to take charge of the horses of the dismounted party. As to myself, to avoid suspicion, I volunteered joining the lieutenant's division, which was likely to have the warmest work.

Every thing happened as I expected, if not altogether as I could have wished; for the treasure was too well guarded to give us any chance of attacking the escort with success. The enemy also advanced with great caution; halted at the entrance of the pass, sent forward a cavalry piquet to reconnoitre the road in advance, and detached infantry *en eclaireurs* up both banks of the hollow way. Having taken these precautions, and closed up the train, they renewed their march.

Our scout gave timely notice of what was passing. We unmuzzled our steeds, whose impatient neighing gave the enemy the first notice of our vicinity, and that we had thrown ourselves between their main body and somewhat compromised advanced guard. Our charge was like the swoop of an eagle upon his prey, whilst the enemy's hurried notes of recall re-

sounded through the forest like the screams of a flight of terrified plover. But the order for their return arrived too late. We fell upon them ere they had time to make any disposition to receive our unlooked for rear-attack, and sabred them to a man.

Whilst this was going forward, some slight confusion manifested itself in the enemy's main body, but the commandant quickly restored order. Sending forward all his horsemen to secure the head of the ravine, and rally, as he hoped, his advanced guard, he reinforced his rear guard with infantry, and then, recalling his tirailleurs to the edge of the defilé, pushed on as quickly as possible to get through the pass, and gain a field where discipline would resume its advantage over numbers.

The party with which I served was again drawn up, anxiously waiting for the signal to renew the attack. We watched in vain, however, for the rising of the bird of Jove. We heard a few scattered shots, which our lieutenant very justly observed augured no good, and saw a formidable body of cavalry deploying rapidly at the issue of the ravine, and preparing to charge us. It was evident, therefore, that Esteban deemed it hopeless to attack, and that it was high time for us to be off. Indeed, had we been briskly attacked, the half of our party would most certainly have been cap-

tured, but the good face we put upon it probably led the enemy to suppose we were well supported, and they contented themselves with firing a volley, as, putting spurs to our horses, we dispersed in all directions.

On reassembling at the appointed rendezvous, the only person missing was Esteban. As soon as prudence admitted, we returned to the late scene of action to make search for our absent chieftain, and found his body lying in the hollow way, but so hacked and disfigured as to render it impossible to tell what had been the manner of his death. It was the general opinion, therefore, since the shots we had heard could in no other way be accounted for, that the enemy's tirailleurs must have discovered him in the tree, and that the Frenchmen, enraged at their severe loss, had thus cruelly mutilated him.

I did not attempt to combat this opinion, and the three men who had *charge of the horses* were quite silent in the matter, though they could, perhaps, have told a different tale.

I see, *Caballeros*, that you are shocked at the little hesitation I showed in taking this caitiff's life ; but I can assure you no scruples of conscience troubled me in the matter, for I had previously learnt that the cowardly rascal had engaged the very men to shoot me, whom I employed to perform that kind action towards him.

Esteban's death being thus placed beyond a doubt, it became necessary to elect a new leader. Rodriguez (the lieutenant) and myself were the only two competitors. I had, as I have already stated, many supporters in the band; and some money which, no matter how, came at this time into my possession, was liberally distributed to increase the number; but, nevertheless, the Catalans and Biscayans, of whom the *quadrilla* principally consisted, could not be brought over to my side, and Rodriguez was preferred by a majority of votes. A separation was loudly advocated by my friends; but to this, with affected humility, I refused to listen. "No," said I, "we are all one family; let us not weaken our strength by dissension. For my own part, I have no wish to command, and will willingly yield obedience to Rodriguez."

The bait took; my friends stood out for a separation; and the supporters of my competitor, charmed by my moderation, proposed (as a division would probably lead to the destruction of both parties) that Rodriguez and I should command alternately. This proposal was adopted with general acclamation, for, whilst the Catalans acknowledged my superior talents for command in the field, they thought the counsel of a Nestor like Rodriguez would temper with prudence my somewhat venture-

some projects ; besides which, he was better acquainted with the country where they wished to act.

I knew that my coadjutor, though a brave old man, possessed no one other quality to fit him for the leader of a band of guerrillas, who should be decisive as well as courageous, full of resources as well as cautious, and whose eye should be quick to turn ground to the best advantage, as well as to acknowledge it as an old acquaintance. In order, therefore, to let the band see his incompetency, and that he might become convinced of it himself, I gave in to all his plans, without offering an objection, and so effectually succeeded in my own, that, after experiencing several severe checks, and reducing our *military chest* to a very small *box*, it became the general wish to change the scene of operations, and proceed to a less devastated, and, consequently, less protected country.

It was accordingly determined to make an experimental excursion into the kingdom of Valencia, with which, whilst following the *contraband* life, I had become well acquainted.

Our *debüt* was most successful, for so unprepared was the enemy for our sudden irruption that we captured a rich convoy under the very walls* of the capital city, without the loss

* I interrupted the Señor Blas here, asking him if Valencia was not an *open city*? "Yes, *Señor Critico*," he replied, "but have not houses walls?"

of a man. But a large force being immediately despatched in pursuit, I (happening to be in command for the day) directed the retreat upon Murcia, thereby enabling the enemy to prevent our return to Catalonia.

This was a hazardous step, for the country to the north was not of a nature to afford us either shelter or resources ; whilst, to the south, all the towns between us and the sea were occupied by French garrisons, which, if we were not quick in our movements, or happened to meet with any check, might easily cut short our further advance, and oblige us to disperse.

To hesitate under these circumstances was to be lost ; so, pushing on *à cierra ojos*, we hardly drew rein until we had passed Guadix, when the vicinity of the impracticable Alpujarra mountains secured us from attack on the left, and, at the same time, assured us a safe retreat in the event of being hard pressed. The enemy, however, seeing that further pursuit would be unavailing, stopped short at Guadix ; and, embracing the opportunity of giving our wearied horses a few days' rest, we established ourselves at the Fuente de la Gitana, the principal sources of the little river Fardes, which, winding through a sequestered dell, at the foot of the Sierra Nevada, is bordered with the richest pasturage. The spot thus selected for our bivouac held out also the advantage of en-

abling us to watch the high road from Guadix to Granada, one of the principal lines of communication of the French army.

Whilst refreshing our horses in this secluded spot, numerous opportunities of attacking the enemy presented themselves. But without a certain prospect of obtaining booty, we were not to be tempted to give the alarm by showing ourselves. Allowing, therefore, various parties to pass to and fro without molestation, we succeeded in leading the enemy to believe that we had crossed the sierra, and thrown ourselves upon the stores of arms and gunpowder in the mining district of Adra.

No sooner were their fears allayed, and confidence restored, than we seized the favourable occasion to pounce upon them. This was afforded us by the march of a convoy, with provisions and money, from Guadix to Granada. As soon as we had received certain advice of its having left the first named city, and reached Diezma (its first day's march), we broke up our camp, and, riding all night, took post in the Sierra Jarana, where we commanded both the roads which, from Diezma, are directed on Granada.

The enemy, wishing to keep as far as possible from the Sierra Nevada, chose the upper or northern road, which was by far the most favourable for our project, there being a dif-

ficult pass to get through, which must unavoidably oblige a convoy to lengthen out and straggle. We accordingly permitted the greater portion of the loaded animals to pass unmolested, and then, falling suddenly upon the rear division, succeeded in capturing and carrying off no less than thirty mules.

We did not, however, escape without loss ; for Rodriguez was left dead upon the field, and several of the band were severely wounded. I drew the party off by a rugged pathway that leads round the sources of the Darro ; crossed the Genil below Guejar ; and, by a rapid march, gained Huelma that same night, ere the news of our exploit had well reached Granada.

We had now got upon the high road from Granada to Alhama, and, proceeding along it for some miles, struck off to the left, and established our bivouac in a wooded sierra, above the village of Agron, from whence we commanded both the great road we had left, and that from Granada to Almuñecar and Motril.

Having eluded all pursuit, and gained a point which, whilst it favoured our future operations, was in the vicinity of some of the most intricate mountain country in Andalusia, but with which I was thoroughly acquainted ; I determined, if possible, to obtain possession of the French governor of Granada's despatches to his subordinates commanding the towns upon the sea-

coast, with the view of ascertaining how his forces were distributed, their strength, &c., as well as the steps he purposed taking to interrupt or pursue my band.

Appointing, therefore, one of my most devoted adherents to the command of the troop during my absence, I doffed my old contrabandista dress, and, accompanied by one only of my men, proceeded to the *ventas* de Huelma, where I understood the French orderlies were in the habit of baiting their horses for half an hour when journeying to and from Alhama.

The place consists only of two wretched *ventas*, and half a dozen *ranchas*. We reached it about mid-day, and, as luck would have it, just in time to see two French Dragoons ride in at the door of one of the inns. After waiting a few minutes to make sure that they had not merely called for their *goutte*, we also rode up to the *venta*, and alighted at the portal, and, securing our horses to the stakes in the wall, entered, as the saying is, *santamente en la casa*.*

The inn was crowded with people, and the two Frenchmen, having given their horses a feed of barley, were holding forth to the *arrieros* and villagers grouped round them; who, with eager, though silent, interest, were listening to their discourse. Our *Ave Maria purissima* hardly attracted notice, an old crone, seated in

* Holyly into the house.

the chimney corner at her spindle, being the only person to mumble in return the usual “*sin pecado concebida*.”* Addressing myself to the *ventero*, I begged he would furnish me with a slice of bread, some oil, vinegar, and the other ingredients requisite for making a *gazpacho*.

“*Caramba!*” exclaimed my host, looking inquisitively at me, “these are not the cooling *alimentos* Blas Maldonado used formerly to ask for!”

“They are *not*, good Pacheco,” said I, finding that the number of years which had elapsed since our last meeting had not prevented his recognizing me,—“They are not, good Pacheco; but as the proverb says,

“*Ajo crudo y vino puro*
“*hacen andar al mozo seguro.*”†

And I gave a significant glance at the Frenchmen.

“Is it so!” replied he; “then to answer you with another proverb—‘*a perro viejo no has tus tus*’‡—how can I serve you?”

“Tell me first,” said I, “do you know those *gavachos*?!”§

* Conceived without sin—the invariable *acknowledgment* of the *Ave Maria* which a devout Spaniard pronounces on crossing the threshold of a house, be it even to commit murder.

† Raw garlic and pure wine make one travel safely.

‡ To an old dog you need not say *tus tus*.

§ A nickname for Frenchmen.

"I do ; they have stopped here several times to bait their horses on the way backwards and forwards to Alhama ; but they are likely to send their despatches under a more numerous escort for the future, if the news be true that a band of *guerrillas* has made its appearance close to Granada ; though they have, as *they* say, cut it to pieces. But let us draw near, and hear their story—of which I had only caught a few words when you called me away."

"I can probably give you a better account of it than *they*," said I ; " therefore, tell me first what sort of men are they ? Think you a couple of resolute fellows could master them readily ?"

"For the matter of that," replied Pacheco, "the *Cabo* is, I suspect, a determined dog ; but the young fellow, who accompanies him, seems, like most of his countrymen, to have *mas viento que fuego** about him."

"Do they smoke ?"

"Like two *Carboneras*."[†]

"That will do ; now let us go and hear what the braggarts have to say ;" and, drawing my *Capa* round so as to conceal the lower part of my face, I joined the circle of *gobemouches*.

The younger of the two Frenchmen, with much gesticulation, and in very bad Spanish, was giving an account of the action between

* More wind than fire.

† Charcoal furnaces.

my band and his countrymen. It was well I had been there, otherwise, I certainly should never have recognized it for the same affair; since he maintained that we had been completely worsted—our chief and upwards of half the band left dead upon the field, and the remainder dispersed in all directions!

“Were no prisoners made?” said I—having first ascertained by a glance all round that no old acquaintances were in the group of listeners.

“Prisoners, *mon brave*,” replied he; “*pas un seul—Sacrastic!* we speared them like wild boars, without giving them time to translate *quartel** into French.”

“You have prudently taken care to have ready the Spanish translation of the French,” I observed.—“And so you were yourself in the *melée*, then?”

“*Je le crois bien! Sacrebleu!*” said the boaster, regardless of the signs of his corporal to be less communicative, “I believe you! *Sacrebleu!* I, myself, spitted half a score of the *sacré gueux*, and I think I should know the rest of the *canaille* by their backs, if ever my eyes lighted upon them again; for I pressed them hard enough; but my horse was too tired to overtake them all.”

“*A quien tanto ve, con un ojo le basta,*”† said

* Quarter.

† For him who sees so well, one eye is enough.

I, adding, lest the laugh my sarcasm had caused amongst my countrymen should excite the corporal's suspicions, "however, I am glad you have given so good an account of the scoundrels, and hope any other factious bands that may attempt to disturb the tranquillity of our province may be similarly dealt with. You must, however, I fear, be ill provided with cavalry, since you have been so soon sent again on duty after such sharp service?"

"Why, we are rather short of cavalry, no doubt," continued the loquacious *gascon*; "but, I rather think, our despatches contain an order for such as can be spared from Malaga to be sent to join us at Granada; and then we shall serve them out in good style."

"Why, I thought you had dispersed them altogether?" said I.

"*Allons, allons!*!" cried the corporal to his companion, "*à cheval!*!" adding, in the same language, which, doubtless, he conceived none of us understood—"I like not that inquisitive *embosé*—what the d—l makes you so communicative?"

"Communicative!" exclaimed the young dragoon; "why you know I have not told them a word of truth, excepting about the order for the cavalry to come and join us; and the sooner that piece of news is spread through the country the better."

My attendant had not been an idle listener to the conversation I have just narrated ; but, having glided unobserved amongst the horses, had quietly occupied himself in taking a fore shoe off the foot of one of the dragoons' chargers. He now joined the circle, making me a sign that all was right, and whispering a few words in the ear of the landlord, whilst, despatching our *gazpacho fresco*, we mounted our horses and rode off toward Alhama.

Before we had proceeded a mile, the two Frenchmen overtook us, and were about to pass on at a brisk trot, when I called out that one of their horses had thrown a shoe. It was that of the corporal. He dismounted, and, after sundry *sacrés*, proposed to his companion that they should return to the *venta* for a smith. I said, if they had a spare shoe, I could furnish them with a hammer and nails, which would, possibly, save time. My offer was thankfully accepted, and the dragoon, dismounting and placing himself between the two horses, so as to hold both their heads, the corporal forthwith proceeded to work.

I waited, of course, to receive back my hammer, and, to pass the time, struck a light and commenced smoking. “*Gasta usted tabaco ?*”* asked I, addressing myself to the young dragoon, presenting him at the same time with a French-

* Literally, *do you expend tobacco ?*

ified looking cigar with a straw inserted at one end.

"Volontiers," said he, taking it and a piece of burning *yesca*,* that I offered him on the flat side of my flint.—"Volontiers! I am a true dragoon."

In receiving the flint back, I purposely let it fall, and, begging he would not trouble himself, dismounted to pick it up, drawing near to the corporal, as if to see how he got on with his work. My companion now, also, alighted to tighten the girths of his saddle, and, at the instant, an explosion took place, the young dragoon was thrown on his back, and the two horses, disengaged from his hold, started off in a fright, pitching the corporal forward on his head. I instantly pinned him to the earth with my knee, and plunged my knife into his neck; whilst my comrade despatched the young dragoon—asking him how it was he had not recognized us by our *backs*, and what he thought of *un cigarro bomba*.†

We secured the despatches and horses, and made off for our bivouac with all speed. On our arrival, I found the band at *Toros y cañas* ;‡ the followers of my late coadjutor, Rodri-

* Punk made of a dried fungus that grows round the roots of the cork tree.

† Bomb-cigar.

‡ Literally, bulls and canes—i. e. high words.

guez, insisting that another captain should be joined with me in the command.

Having had sufficient experience of the inconveniences attending this divided form of government, and being now so situated as to insist on having my own way, I determined to cut the matter very short, exclaiming “*à otro perro con ese hueso!*”* “Let those who choose turn back, and God be with them! and I think—judging from the despatches that have this day fallen into my hands—they will stand in great need of his protection! Those who prefer following my fortunes shall obey no orders but mine.”

Alarmed at what I had hinted about the despatches, all but the *aspirant* to the joint dictatorship and two of his relatives, joined my standard. These three *desgraciados* determined to leave the band. In vain I pointed out the danger of such a proceeding—the impossibility of their making their way across a country with which they were unacquainted, and that was now beset with enemies. They, sneeringly, replied that the same road they had followed in coming would conduct them back. This, however, for a reason which I shall hereafter explain, I determined that it should *not* do.

Detaining them, therefore, until the morrow, on the plea of receiving their due proportion

* Throw that bone to another dog.

of the booty we had made, I despatched a trusty messenger to Granada, who, presenting himself to the French governor, informed him that the greater part of my troop had passed close under the walls of Alhama, directing its march towards Velez, after having killed the two dragoons bearing his despatches to the commandant of that town; but adding, that he had heard, on very good authority, a detachment of three men, conveying important communications from me, was to return, on the following day, into the eastern provinces of the kingdom, and that he had come to offer himself as a guide, to intercept the party.

On the following morning, our seceders took their departure, having, I may truly say, "*el despeñadero a los ojos, y lobos à las espaldas.*"* The next day my messenger returned, and informed me of the result of his mission, giving out, however, that he had obtained intelligence that a valuable convoy was about to proceed immediately from Granada to Motril. The temptation was irresistible, and a rapid counter-march on Alhendin was determined on that very night.

We reached our destination by dawn, where I was told (what I was already fully informed of) that the convoy had already passed by, and that our quondam companions had been seized

* A precipice before, wolves behind.

and hung up on the road-side. There they were, sure enough, dangling from the trees like *espata-lobos*,* and on the forehead of each was nailed the following notice in the French language.

“ The undersigned, Lieutenant General of the Imperial French Army, and governor of Granada for his Catholic majesty Joseph Napoleon, &c. &c. &c., hereby gives notice, that the band of *factieux*, under the infamous traitor Blas Mal-donado, having appeared in the military division under his command, all persons who may be persuaded to join, harbour, or furnish information or provisions to the same, will, on conviction thereof, be deemed equally traitors to their country, as the aforesaid Blas and his band, and will meet with the condign summary punishment due to their crimes ; in witness whereof, he has this day caused to be hanged the rebel hereunto annexed.

“ _____.”

This exceeded my hopes : the Basques of my party did not fail to give a very literal translation of this notice to their comrades, who longed for an opportunity of taking vengeance on our inhuman enemies. But it was not with the motive of keeping alive the inextinguishable hate that already existed between the *guerrillas* and the French that I had got up this melo-drama ; but rather to deter the remaining Catalans of

* Scare wolves.

my band from depending on themselves, should our interests jar on any future occasion, and they be inclined to throw off their allegiance. They were now made sensible how completely their want of acquaintance with the country rendered them dependent upon me. On my own countrymen I knew reliance might be placed, and I generally entrusted them with the out-post duty.

I affected, nevertheless, to be much enraged at the treatment the *Pobrecitos*, so lately our companions in arms, had experienced, and, a chapel being at hand, readily acquiesced—for I liked to encourage superstitious habits in my followers—in the proposal of offering up masses for their souls; concluding our pious work with a vow not to spare any *Frenchman*, woman, or child, that should fall into our hands for the next six months.

“Al hierro caliente
machacar de repente,”*

as the saying is. Having satisfied myself, from information collected from the peasantry, that all the disposable French cavalry at Granada had been laid upon the false scent I had furnished the governor, I thought the opportunity favourable for enabling my men to keep their pious vow, and, at the same time, fill their *fajas*† with *onzas*. Descending, therefore, boldly

* Strike the iron whilst it is hot.

† Sash—The Spanish peasants carry their money wrapped up within the folds of their wide sashes.

into the fertile *Vega* of Granada, we made a dash at Santa Fé, reaching the little walled town at the very moment a party of French soldiers were busily occupied in loading some bullock carts with contributions raised in the surrounding district. So scared were they by our sudden appearance, that, instead of shutting the gates in our faces, and *haciendo la higa*,* as they might have done, they took themselves off *à bride abattue*, and never stopped until they had placed the Genil between us. So sudden, indeed, was our arrival, and so precipitate their departure, that we caught two luckless French commissaries, who, being busily engaged in taking an account of barrels of flour stored in one of the churches at the further end of the town, had not heard the alarm.

My troopers were anxious to *dar quito* † for their comrades hanged at Alhendin ; and I was far from being disposed to baulk their fancy, but thought we would do it with *éclat*. Having, therefore, first plunged the two caitiffs "*patos arriba*"‡ in one of their flour casks, we took them to the city gate facing Granada ; which, being old, and hanging loosely upon its hinges, we were enabled, by cutting two small notches in the side posts, to force their heads through,

* Literally, *make the fig*, that is, thrust the thumb between the fore and middle fingers in sign of contempt.

† Give a quittance.

‡ Feet uppermost.

and so throttle them by closing the gate upon its centre, leaving their heads sticking out, like the mock-guns of a smuggler's *xebeque*.*

This done, I wrote with some chalk the following notice on the outside of the gate.

“ The undersigned, Principal Ratcatcher to his Catholic Majesty *Fernando Septimo*, charged by an act of the *Junta* of government now established at Cadiz with the duty of clearing the province of Andalusia of the rats and other vermin with which it is at this moment overrun, to the destruction and undermining of the glorious fabric of our independence, hereby gives notice, that any persons who may henceforth feed, harbour, or encourage the same, will themselves be considered equally as detrimental to the country as the aforesaid rats, and will, on conviction, meet with the same condign summary punishment.

“ In witness whereof, I have this day throttled the two weasels hereunto made fast.

“ BLAS MALDONADO.”

I was ever afterwards called *El Ratonero*.

* Peculiar sailing boat.

CHAPTER XV.

BLAS EL GUERRILLERO — *continued.*

THAT the French might be sure to see their comrades, we drove all the inhabitants before us out of the place; a matter of no great difficulty, since *Santa Fé*, though dignified by its pious founders* with the title of *city*, is but a small walled village, the principal streets of which form a Greek cross; so that, standing in the centre of the place, its four gates may be seen by merely turning round, and are all within pistol-shot.

Carrying off all the plate, money, &c., that we could find, I determined now, whilst the country was clear, and a direct road open, to visit the place of my nativity; the thirst for revenge on my enemies and detractors increasing, as the opportunity of gratifying it appeared more within my reach.

We directed our march, therefore, down the

* It was founded by Ferdinand and Isabella, whilst laying siege to Granada.

vega, towards Osuna, demanding rations in the king's name wherever we had occasion to halt, and levying contributions whenever the least hesitation was shown in complying with our demands. In this way we picked up considerable booty, besides carrying off all the good horses we met with on the route; for the French, in consideration of the quietness with which Andalusia had submitted to the yoke, had hitherto dealt very leniently with its inhabitants.

Avoiding Loja and Antequera, which were occupied by French garrisons, we struck into the mountains again on approaching Osuna, proceeding by way of Saucejo and Villa Martin de San Juan, to the *venta* of Zaframagon, on the road between Ronda and Seville.

I selected this spot, as being at a convenient distance from my native town, and as affording, at the same time, good shelter to my band during my purposed short absence. Lodging two of my men, therefore, disguised as peasants, in the *venta*, and bivouacking the rest of the troop in the adjacent forest, I proceeded, accompanied only by one trusty attendant, to M——; deeming it most prudent to reconnoitre the place, ere carrying my plan of revenge into execution.

It was now upwards of two years since I had paid my last hasty visit to the place, twenty-

one since I had seen Don Benito. In that long period I had changed from youth to manhood,—to old age, I may almost say, as far as appearance went; for ten years of hard labour on the parched rock of Ceuta had marked my face with the deep lines of grief and suffering; and the scar left by my son's hand had as completely changed the expression of my countenance, even since my last visit to M——, as scenes of blood and strife had changed my natural character. Fancy not, however, by what I now say, that it was my purpose to take the life of the wretched old man whose presence I sought, though his deceit had been the cause of all my misfortunes. No! on my soul I swear it, I meant only to upbraid him with the wrongs he had heaped upon me, to —.

Señor Blas here broke off with some little sign of emotion; but, swallowing a bumper of wine, he presently continued in a calmer tone.

But, to proceed with the thread of my story.— Wrapping an old cloak about me, and leaving my horse in charge of my attendant at the entrance of the town, I proceeded on foot to the principal *posada*, in full confidence that, changed and disguised as I was, no one could possibly recognise me.

Many persons, but chiefly old men (for those capable of bearing arms had been called to the armies), were assembled round the fire. I im-

mediately joined the circle, and entered into conversation, representing myself as a stranger to the province. After some little time I ventured to ask if Don Benito Quisquilla still resided at the place; and, being answered in the affirmative, by way of allaying any suspicions, asked if his grandson, Fernando Maldonado, yet lived?

“No,” replied an old man, whom I recognised as the town-crier, “he is dead; he fell gloriously in the battle-field, fighting for his country’s liberty!”

“What!” I exclaimed, “did he not join the French army with his father?”

“With his father!” cried half a dozen voices in concert. “What! did that miscreant add to his crimes by joining the ranks of the vile enemies of our country? No: Fernando died like a true-born *Andaluz*; he fell, covered with the blood of our oppressors, in the fatal field of Tudela. But how know you, *Tio*, that his father joined the French?”

I stated that I had been so informed on very good authority, and had indeed come expressly to M—— to make a communication concerning Blas to his father-in-law, Don Benito.

“Go not near the old man if you have aught to say of that miscreant Blas,” replied the town-crier, “unless it be to inform him that the devil has carried him off in a hurricane.”

I rose, and left the house choking with rage. “What!” I ejaculated, “does the old villain attempt to clear his own conscience by accusing me, who have been the innocent victim of his crimes? Did he not blast my earliest hopes, drive me to desperation, bring my wife to the grave, rob me of my son, and, finally, send that son to fall by my hand!—miscreant in his teeth.”

With these excited feelings, I proceeded straight to Don Benito’s house, and rang the bell. The door flew open; and, in answer to my inquiry if Don Benito was within, a female servant from the gallery informed me that I should find him in one of the apartments on the ground-floor, opening into the *patio*.*

It was well I had been told that it was Don Benito I should find there, otherwise I never could have supposed that the wretched, withered being whom I beheld, enveloped in a grey flannel dressing-gown, with slipshod feet, and a black *montera* cap on his head, was the once personable father of Alitéa. He did not attempt to rise from the *silla poltrona*† in which he was seated; but, removing the spectacles from his eyes, and wiping

* Most Spanish houses are built in a square form, enclosing an open court, or *patio*. A servant “answers the door,” by raising the latch, by means of a pulley, and demanding your business from the gallery of the first floor, a plan which would be attended with *considerable inconvenience* in London.

† Arm-chair.

them with his pocket-handkerchief, desired me to approach and state my business.

For a moment I felt inclined to turn away and leave the house ; a feeling of pity crept into my heart, and bade me spare him. Though I owed him little mercy for myself, he had intended to be kind to my boy ; he had never entirely cast off my Alitéa ; and he seemed so thoroughly wretched, that it appeared impossible to add more to his misery. I wish I had followed this first impulse, but a second thought determined me to try if his unforgiving nature remained unchanged. I began by simply asking if I was addressing Don Benito Quisquilla.

“ What ! can it be ! ” he exclaimed, starting upon his legs, as if newly invigorated with the breath of life ; “ is it my Fernando ? Approach. No, no ! I see — *he* was in the bloom of youth, but *you*, like myself, have, it appears, bent to the gusts of many a tempest. Still, that voice — that figure ! Say, I beseech you, stranger, who are you ? ”

The old man’s emotion nearly choked him. I was half tempted to throw myself at his feet, when he continued, without waiting for my answer :

“ But the wretched, misguided being, who begot him, had the same —. Excuse this emotion ; you have touched a chord —.”

“ Wretched being, indeed ! ” I exclaimed, in-

terrupting him, “ you know then the fate of the *wretched* Blas, and half my business is already executed.”

“ His *fate*? No,” said the old man. “ Has he then met the punishment so repeatedly due to his crimes? Has his last act of disloyalty to his king and country—of which I have had tidings—brought him to the gallows?”

“ No, no!” I replied—all my rage returning at the old scoundrel’s vindictiveness—“ He lives, wretched, indeed, as you have said, for by your instrumentality he became the *murderer of his son!*”

“ *Jesus! Higo de Dios!* what do I hear!” ejaculated Don Benito; “ has the infamous villain crowned all his iniquities by so horrible a crime?”

“ Vindictive old dotard!” I replied, throwing back my cloak, which had hitherto partially concealed my face, and clenching at him my right hand, “ this hand, given at the altar, before all the saints of heaven, to your daughter—this very hand, through your accursed machinations, directed the point of the knife which drew the life’s-blood from a son’s heart!”

“ Monster! hardened, damned, incorrigible monster!” screamed Don Benito, “ may every curse ——!” But my fiery temperament would not allow me to listen patiently to the old man’s imprecations. We had approached close to

each other; I raised my hand to drive the curse down his blasphemous throat—nothing more, for my knife was in my girdle, had I wished to use it—when the infatuated old man seized me by the collar, and called for help. It was the last sound that escaped from his lips—he fell dead at my feet.

Señor Blas here paused a moment to make choice of a fresh cigar, and then thus continued his story.

I left the house without a moment's delay, hurried through the town, and, mounting my horse, rode "*à toda priesa*" to rejoin my troop. I had intended to march it on M—, which was quite defenceless, and lay a heavy contribution upon the inhabitants, but a foolish weakness made me decide on keeping to myself the fatal result that had attended my visit; so, framing an excuse for the non-execution of my project, I drew my band off into another part of the Serranía de Ronda.

We remained in this intricate country several months, watching the different approaches to Ronda, which, being one of the dépôts for storing the supplies collected for the siege of Cadiz, afforded us abundant opportunities of making booty. During that period I became acquainted with one Alonzo Bazan, the chief of another guerrilla. He was a gallant young fellow, though affecting the Royalist rather too

much to please me. However, we joined our bands together on several occasions, to attack the common enemy, when a greater force than we respectively commanded was necessary.

My intimacy with Alonzo brought me acquainted with his sister, now my wife. She was at that time a blooming girl of eighteen, and over head and ears in love with a young *majocito* of some substance, named Beltran Galindiz, who was the sworn friend of her brother, and had, at his persuasion—for I do not think he had a natural calling that way—raised a band of guerrillas amongst his relatives and dependents.

I confess to you, *Caballeros*, that I never felt the same love for Engracia, for such is my *esposa*'s name, that I had for my long-lost but ever-regretted Alitéa. The passion, indeed, to which her youth and beauty gave birth, might, perhaps, have passed away like many others, without leaving any impression, but for the very indifference with which my advances were received, and the passionate fondness that she evinced for the contemptible Beltran. In vain I practised every art to supplant him in her affections; and, what maddened me yet more than the thought of this beardless boy being preferred to myself, was that, as if confident of his influence over her, *he* regarded my rivalry with the most perfect indifference.

It happened, soon after my acquaintance with Engracia commenced, that her brother Alonzo, during a visit to Ronda, was arrested as a spy, and the French commandant of that fortress, thinking it would have a beneficial effect in putting down the insurrection to have him publicly executed at the place of his birth, directed him to be taken on the following day to Utrera for that purpose.

Having obtained notice of this, I determined, short as the time was to make arrangements, to attempt a rescue. Accordingly, I proceeded without delay to Alfaquime (a village overlooking the road by which the escort would have to march), and, sending the horses of my party to the convent of *N. S. de los Remedios*, about half a league further on towards Olbera, took post with my dismounted troopers at the head of a steep and very narrow *defilé*, which the road enters after winding round the base of the rocky mound, whereon the little town of Alfaquime is strewed like a stork's nest.

Making my men conceal themselves in the gorse and underwood that clothed the banks of the narrow pass, and giving them orders not on any account to pull a trigger until they received the word, and then with deliberate aim, I picked out two good marksmen, whom I directed to fire at the *horse* rode by Alonzo; and, finally, selecting a bold rider, posted him as a

decoy on a conspicuous knoll beyond the pass, but overlooking the approach from Ronda, giving him my own horse (which I knew would outstrip any pursuers, should he have to gallop for it), and directing him to mount only when he was quite sure the enemy had seen him, and then ride off, *ventre a terre*, as if taken by surprise.

My plan succeeded *à merveille*. Two French dragoons, who were pushed on in advance, as the party approached Alfaquime, soon discovered my scout, and seeing him mount his horse in great haste, and ride off as if to carry information to others beyond, spurred after him up the ravine. The main body of the escort, seeing their comrades gain the table land at its head without obstruction, took it for granted the coast was clear, and hastened up the ravine to keep them in view.

At the word, “*fuego*,”* Alonzo and six of the twelve Frenchmen composing the escort rolled to the dust; those who were so fortunate as to escape unhurt turned their ‘horses’ heads, and fled back to Ronda. Alonzo was only stunned by the fall, but his horse was killed. We secured the chargers of the dead men, and rode in pursuit of the two dragoons who had given chace to our scout. We met them returning yet faster than they had gone, having

* Fire.

discovered that we had sold them *gato por liebre*.*

They were two gallant fellows, and attempted to cut their way through us in spite of the fearful odds against them. This, *Caballeros*, (showing his mutilated hand) is a *souvenir* of their proficiency in the sabre exercise. *Carajo!* the hard-mouthing French brute I bestrode would not answer the bit so as to enable me to parry the blow; but my pistol brought the donor to the ground just as he had cut down one of my men, and was flattering himself he had got clear off. The other Frenchman made a desperate resistance also, but was sabred after wounding two of my *quadrilla*.

This exploit was followed by several others, wherein the *Gavachos* were equally maltreated, but, into the details of which, it would be wearisome to enter. Suffice it to say that at length my name was so constantly *en la boca de la fama*,† that a large reward was offered for the body of *Blas el Ratonero*, dead or alive.

Whether the bribe thus publicly offered, or merely the intrigues of Beltran, led to an adventure, which—seeing you are not disposed to sleep—I will now relate, I never could satisfactorily learn. Perhaps both had a hand in it, with a little envy to boot; for, as our *refran* says, *donde reyna la envidia, no puede vivir la*

* Cat for hare.

† In the mouth of fame

virtud ;* and I must needs confess that some of my followers were villains quite capable of *saccando los dientes de un ahorcado*,† if they would gain but the price of a bottle of wine by it.

I must, however, go back a little in my story, to inform you that, in gratitude for his deliverance from the French, my friend Alonzo (who considered that Beltran had rather held back on that occasion) declared himself in favour of my suit to his sister. But she, still infatuated with my smooth-tongued rival, whilst admitting my claims upon her esteem, said it was out of her power to regard me with a more tender feeling.

My *love affair* remained in this state, when one morning Alonzo repaired to my bivouac in the neighbourhood of Ubrique, and, telling me that a spy, on whose fidelity he could perfectly rely, had sent him information that the enemy's garrison at Ronda had been so reduced by draughts for the siege of Cadiz that the defence of the place was intrusted almost entirely to a small detachment of cavalry, proposed that we should make a combined attack upon it;

* Where envy reigns, there virtue cannot live.

The lines of Burns,

“ O wad some pow’r, the giftie gie us,
To see ousels as others see us !”

often occurred to me in the course of Señor Blas’s story.

† Of extracting the teeth from one who has been hanged.

he undertaking to engage Beltran in the project by making a diversion in our favour to draw off part of the garrison in an opposite direction.

My own accounts of the state of the garrison of Ronda coinciding perfectly with that of Alonzo, I readily agreed to his proposal; and it was decided that, after he had given the necessary instructions to Beltran, with whom, notwithstanding their little coolness, he still continued on friendly terms, a messenger should be sent to me, to fix the day for our *rendezvous* at Grazalema, a small but strongly situated town, on the line of communication between Ronda and Cadiz, from which the French had recently been driven.

After waiting impatiently for several days without receiving any further intelligence; a letter from Alonzo at length reached me, accounting for the delay by informing me he had been seized with a bad *Tertiana*, which kept him a prisoner at Gaucin, and, he regretted to say, would prevent his taking an active part in the projected attack on the enemy; but that every thing had been arranged as agreed between us, excepting that Beltran had preferred joining me with his troop, being but little acquainted with the country about El Burgo (whither it was proposed to decoy the enemy), and would cross the Guadiaro with his band at

La Torre del Paso on the third day after the date of this communication, and remain there until he heard from me. Meanwhile, Alonzo said, his own band had proceeded to El Burgo, under the command of his brother Melchor.

On the receipt of this letter, I immediately quitted my bivouac, and proceeded to Grazalema, so timing my movements as not to reach that town until the sun had sunk beneath the wide horizon of the Atlantic ocean; and, after establishing myself in the house of an old *compadre*,* I sallied forth to post the requisite videttes at the different outlets of the town. On returning to my quarters, I found a billet lying upon the table, containing the following mysterious warning, written in a female hand.

“BLAS MALDONADO.

“There are traitors in your band. Take care how you move from Grazalema, and, above all, beware of *Pépé el Alamin*.† Act with your wonted decision and circumspection, and you may yet escape the snare that is laid for you; but scorn not the advice of one who watches over you with the devoted affection that a woman’s heart alone is capable of feeling.”

I was lost in amazement; and who my fair *inamorata* could be was not the least part of the mystery. That there was treason of some sort

* Old crony.

† *Pépé*, short for Josef.—*Alamin*, faithful.

stirring was evident, but where to seek for it was the difficulty. Could Alonzo's illness be feigned? and his intention to betray me? Could it be a mere device of the French to detain me in the *guet à pans* of Grazalema, whilst they surrounded me? But how should *they* know of my arrival? Was it possible that my own secretary—the son of my adoption—Pépé el *Alamin*—was it possible that *he* would betray me?

My first impulse was to send for this worthy, and tax him with his treason; but circumspection was pointed out as necessary; I had no proofs to convict him, and the danger to be apprehended from others engaged in the plot would still be hanging over my head. I determined, therefore, to adopt another course, and endeavour if possible to trace the dark conspiracy to the fountain-head.

My plan arranged, I sent for *Jacobo*, my lieutenant, and telling him that I was about to proceed secretly to El Burgo, with a view of ascertaining that every thing was going on *corriente*,* gave him a sealed packet containing instructions how to act, in the event of my absence being prolonged beyond eight and forty hours; until which time had expired, however, it was not to be opened. They were very brief, *à sauter*†—Hang Pépé, and save yourself by a rapid flight to Zahara.

* Without stoppage.

† To wit.

I then summoned Pépé to my presence, and informing him that the receipt of a very important communication, rendering it expedient that I should without loss of time consult my confederates Alonzo and Beltran, I was about to proceed forthwith to Gaucin ; but, as it was essentially necessary that my absence should not be known to any one but himself, I directed him to meet me at a certain spot on the outskirts of the town in half an hour, bringing with him a fleet and sure-footed mule.

Stealing forth at the appointed time, I found Pépé at his post with every thing ready. He muttered something as I threw my leg across the saddle, about having lost my confidence ; hoped I was not periling myself unnecessarily, and would be prudent, as without me the quadrilla would be like an *olla sin tocino*.*

“ As to personal danger, Pépé,” I made answer, “ dismiss your fears for me. As I told you before, I am only going to see my friends Beltran and Alonzo ; but unless I see them this very night, our project to surprise Ronda must be abandoned.”

“ Can you not,” he rejoined, “ communicate this to them by letter ? your presence here may be very necessary ; I will be the bearer.”

“ Impossible,” said I ; “ it may be necessary to alter the whole of our arrangements. Good

* An *olla* without *bacon*—an essential ingredient for its well-being.

night, my faithful Pépé; be assured you have my full confidence. Should my non-appearance to-morrow excite surprise, say I am unwell, and have given orders not be disturbed; but if my absence exceed forty-eight hours, go to Jacobo, and tell him all you know of my movements. He is aware of the value I set upon you; and your head—in the situation in which he will then be placed—will be required by him. Once more *adios y Pesetas!* with this stout mule I trust I shall be able to reach Gaucin before midnight;” and putting spurs to the animal’s sides, I urged him rapidly down the steep acclivity of the *Sierra Endrinal*, taking the *trocha* to *Cortes*.

The dark shadows of the lofty impending mountain soon concealed my movements from observation, and quitting the beaten track, I struck into a path on the left hand, which is used only by the goatherds, and leads through a dense forest to *Montejaque*. Putting my animal to the utmost speed the bad road would admit, I reached that village in two hours.

Every inmate of the little Eagle’s nest was at my command. I found no difficulty, therefore, whilst a barber was robbing me of my mustaches and eyebrows, in getting my mule exchanged for a stout *burro*, my military costume for a tattered *zamarra*,* and thus metamorphosed, is-

* Dress worn by the herdsmen, made of sheepskins.

sued forth from the village. Descending by a rugged foothpath to the river Guadiaro, and fording the stream a little above where a remarkable cavern, called the *Cueva del Gato*, overhangs its right bank, I made a wide circuit round Ronda, until I had gained the high road from that place to Gaucin ; and then turning to the left (directing my ass's head towards the French garrison), proceeded quietly along the road, until, on arriving at the commencement of the long suburb, which extends beyond the walls on the south side of the town, I fell in with an enemy's piquet.

My business being demanded, I desired to be forthwith conducted to the commandant of the fortress, stating that I had information of the utmost consequence to communicate. " You have the look of one who has important *disclosures* to make," observed the corporal of the party, pointing to a large rent in my cloak, whilst examining me from head to foot with a lantern ; at which *bon mot* his men, as in duty bound, laughed very heartily. " You wish no doubt to make a clean breast before you are shot for a *Judas* ! "

" Wit without discretion, my friend," said I, " is like a sword in the hands of a fool. Great ends are sometimes gained by small means ; so lead me to your officer without further parley, otherwise your shoulders will have to bear a heavy responsibility."

"I have half a mind to handcuff the fellow for his self-importance," said the Frenchman to his companions, not supposing I could understand his language; "and would too, only that there *does* appear to be something stirring; for one of his cut-throat *compatriots* has already been admitted to make '*important disclosures*,' within the last twenty-four hours. *Eh bien mon vieux*, you shall be forwarded, but let us first see what you have about you." So saying, my person was strictly searched; but I had only a few *ochavos* about me, half a dozen doubloons, which I had brought in case of need (for "*quien no trae sogas se ahoga*,"* as we Spaniards say), being tied to the rope passed through my *borrico's* mouth.

Another short delay took place at the gate of the fortress; but an order was finally brought from the commandant to conduct me to his presence.

The information I had gained, that another of my countrymen had been recently admitted to the fortress on a similar errand as myself, tended to confirm the anonymous warning of treachery, and made my position rather alarming; since, if brought face to face with the other informer, I should indubitably be recognised, and as certainly be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

* He who neglects to take a rope may be drowned.

However, my motto was ever *a lo hecho buen pecho.** It was too late to recede ; so muffling myself up in the old cloak to avoid being recognised by any of my countrymen, and taking the doubloons from their hiding-place, I left my *monture* at the town gate, and, accompanied by a file of soldiers, proceeded on foot to the governor's abode.

His excellency had just returned from his nightly *tertulia*, and, attended by a single *aide-de-camp*, or secretary, was awaiting my arrival in his dressing-room.

The governor was a wizen-faced elderly man, short, thin, and phthisical, with quick grey eyes, thick bushy eyebrows, a high forehead, and a nose made expressly for taking snuff. He appeared to be, and I believe was, one of the *émigrés rentrés*, whom, about this time, the Emperor Napoleon was imprudently admitting into his service. The secretary, on the other hand, had all the appearance of *un vieux caporal* ; his pockmarked full face, shaggy black hair, *coiffé à la Brutus*, and affected *brusque franchise*, denoting him clearly to be *un homme du peuple*.

Haciendo la Zalama,† and then looking round at my escort, I said, that the information I had to impart might better, perhaps, be communicated as privately as possible.

* To the deed with a good heart. † Making the salaam.

“*Qu'est ce qu'il dit?*” asked the governor, turning to his aide-de-camp.

This having been duly translated to him, “*Bien!*” he replied, in a sharp querulous key; and asking the corporal if my person had been searched, ordered him to withdraw with the escort. This done, addressing me in very bad Spanish, he begged to be made acquainted with the nature of my communication, desiring his secretary, who, I soon found out, conversed fluently in the Castillian language, to pay attention to what I said.

I briefly stated, that a plan had been laid by some guerrilla chieftains, assembled in the neighbouring Sierras, to entice him from Ronda, whilst a large body of *facciosos*, collected at El Burgo, was to pounce upon the fortress; that I was master of all the details of the project, and was willing to lend him my services in frustrating it.

He listened attentively until I had concluded, and my harangue had been translated into French; and then, compressing his eyebrows, and looking earnestly at me, repeated, “ Collected at El Burgo, you say?”

“ Si, Señor.”

“ And in what force?”

I stated a very exaggerated number.

“ And how many of the *facciosos* may there be at Grazalema?”

“ Some forty or fifty.”

“ This appears to be an intelligent rascal, *Leboucher*,” said his excellency, now addressing his aide-de-camp; who, standing at the fireplace, had been attentively perusing a paper hanging against the wall, from which, however, he from time to time turned round, to take a look at me. “ This appears to be an intelligent rascal, but his information differs *in toto* from that furnished by *the other*. Keep your eye upon him, therefore, whilst I put a few more questions, but do not let him perceive that you are watching him.”

“ I have *had* my eye upon him,” replied *Mr. Butcher*, “ and, strange to say, the fellow corresponds in many respects with the description I have before me of *El Ratonero*.”

“ *Diable!*” exclaimed the governor, “ give it me;” and he cast his eye hastily over the paper handed to him, without once looking up at me. This was most fortunate; for, from the dangerous situation in which I found myself placed, my countenance would, probably, have betrayed me, notwithstanding all my efforts to appear unconcerned, had one glance been directed towards me, especially had any questions been put to me at the moment. Fortunately, I say, however, the governor did not look up, nor say a word to me, until he had perused the paper which his aide-de-camp presented, and drew

his attention to ; but then, suddenly fixing his quick little eyes upon me, he asked rapidly, as if to throw me off my guard, “ Do you know one *Blas Malditado* ?”

“ Blas who, did your excellency say ?” asked I, affecting not to know whom he meant.

“ *Blas el Ratonero* ,” he rejoined.

“ Oh, *Blas Maldonado* !” I exclaimed. “ Ay, that I do ! I know him as well as I know my right arm, and have a long account to settle with him some day ; for I owe him all my ills, and, *por quien Dios es* ,* he shall have honest payment !”

“ No, *Leboucher* ,” said the governor, now turning to his *factotum* , “ no ; you are certainly mistaken — he is, decidedly, *not* the rat-catcher. I think I am a sufficient judge of human nature to pronounce, that no man could act the part of the *injurié* so well. This fellow’s hate is heartfelt, be assured, but I will probe him a little more ;” and, again addressing himself to me, he asked, “ Do you know where this *Blas* now is ?”

“ Not exactly,” I replied, “ for he moves about like a ball of quicksilver. One day he is at *Zeca*, another at *Meca*. There is no catching him.”

“ Where does he say ?” asked the governor,

* Literally, by who God is.

addressing his secretary — “*à Meca ? où diable donc est Meca ?*”

“ Allow me to question him,” said Señor Leboucher, with an ill-suppressed smile, a request to which the governor gave a pettish assent.

“ *Allons, mon brave ! sans phrases !* you know this Blas well ?” commenced my new interrogator.

“ Right well.”

“ And is he a man of such determination as report says ?”

“ He is a bold fellow,” I replied, “ one who is not to be trifled with. He is always as good as his word, and his promises are engraved with the knife’s point.”

Fixing his eyes now upon me with a penetrating glance, whilst, at the same time, a kind of smile played about his sarcastic mouth, implying, “ now you understand perfectly what I mean,” he very deliberately and significantly asked, “ Is he to be *bought* ?”

“ *No, señor,* ” said I, “ I think not. He hates your nation from the bottom of his soul ; and, if you have any dealings with him, be assured you will find but a *nest* where you think to get *birds* .”

“ And what is *your* name, friend ?”

“ *Jacobo Vargas,* ” I replied, giving him the name of my lieutenant.

“ Can you write ?”

" I can."

" Then do me the favour to write your name on this paper."

I did so.

" Do you know one Beltran Galindiz?" continued my interrogator.

" Yes, by character."

" Is *he* faithful to your cause, think you?"

" Not to my cause, certainly." (Here the governor smiled, as much as to say to his assistant, you are not so clever as you think yourself.) " *I* am a good Spaniard, and loyal subject of Joseph Napoleon; *he* is a friend of the *despotic Bourbon*."

The secretary smiled in return at the old aristocrat, and continued his cross-questioning.

" And where did you leave this redoubtable Blas?"

" I have not yet said that I was with him." (Another smile from the governor.)

" True, true; but it would appear that you have lately seen him."

" I saw him last at Grazalema."

" When?"

" This very night."

" *Sacrebleu!* he is already netted then," exclaimed he, turning round and addressing the governor, " and we have, therefore, no occasion for this fellow's services, except to stretch a rope; for, take my word, he is a spy — a spy of

this very Blas, if not the rascal himself; who, with all due deference to your superior discernment, I still think he is. Suppose, however, as their accounts differ so widely, we first have our two spies confronted?"

"Perhaps it would be as well," replied the governor; "but we must not break faith with the *other* either. So, show him first this fellow's name; ask if he knows him; and, then, whether he objects to see him face to face. We shall then, I think, find out whether El Burgo or Grazalema be the real point of concentration of the *canaille*."

The foregoing questions had led me to *suspect* who this *other* was; the concluding speech of the governor, like the sun dispersing the *mirage* on the Guadalquivir's banks, made every thing clear. The information he possessed *could* only have been given by one of my confederates, and if he and I were confronted my fate was sealed. It was a trying moment for me; the slightest hesitation would have been my ruin; the gibbet, I might say, was prepared; but I determined not to be hanged, without making an effort to shift the rope round the neck of my betrayer. I collected myself, therefore, for the coming crisis, and, as soon as the secretary had left the room, addressing the governor in his own language, said, "Your excellency is so perfect a master of the Castilian tongue, that

it would be presumption in me to stammer out the few words of French with which I am acquainted, only that I wish to avoid all appearance of deceit and —.”

“ *Bon Dieu de la France! mais vous parlez parfaitement!*” interrupted the governor. “ *Pourquoi diable! ne m'avez vous pas dit cela auparavant?*”

“ Because I was never asked the question, please your excellency.”

“ *Vrai, vrai* — that fellow, Leboucher, *will* always be cleverer than every body else! But, since you *do* speak French, and well too, pray have the goodness to make all further communications in that language.”

“ Willingly,” I replied, “ since such is your excellency’s wish; and, to speak the truth, it is much more satisfactory to me to go to the fountain-head. I have ever found, with blood as with water, that the higher the stream the clearer it runs.”

His excellency took a pinch of snuff with unequivocal satisfaction, and begged me to proceed with what I was going to state when he interrupted me.

“ I was about to observe,” said I, “ that I might claim the same exemption from being brought before any of my countrymen, as has been granted to this *other*; but I am no secret informer — on the contrary —.”

Here Señor Leboucher re-entered the apartment, and, giving the governor back the paper on which I had written my (or, rather, my lieutenant's) name, said, "The other knows this person well, but on no account will ——."

"Hush, hush!" exclaimed the governor, "our friend here speaks French."

"The devil he does!" ejaculated the secretary. "Then hang him up at once for a spy! what further proof is required of his being so? Depend on it, he is *El Ratonero*, and not the person he represents himself to be."

"*Un moment*," said the governor, taking him aside, and whispering for some time in his ear, by which, however, whatever it may have been, the secretary did not appear at all convinced.

"I am not surprised, Señor," said I, addressing Monsieur Leboucher as soon as their consultation appeared to flag, "I am not surprised at your continuing in the mistake of supposing me to be *El Ratonero*. It requires less clear-sightedness than I am sure you possess, to discover a likeness, which (in spite of all my endeavours to conceal it) has frequently been observed. But I here solemnly swear, *por Dios y todos los Santos*, (and I crossed myself most devoutly) that Blas Maldonado has been through life my greatest enemy." Was not that true, Caballeros?

"To put all your doubts at rest, however," I

continued, “ bring forth this *other* — this Beltran, for well I know who your informer is. As regards me, have no scruples ; for, as I have said before, I am no secret informer, but an open and faithful friend of the brave nation that has come to release my country from her fetters. As it affects the matter I have come about, however, our meeting will render abortive the whole plan I was about to propose to you. *He* will at once see that his machinations are discovered, and you will have to hang him —a poor devil that never has and never can do you any harm ;—whereas, by his absence from his confederates at El Burgo, *they* will be aware that their project to entrap you has miscarried, and you will consequently miss the glorious opportunity of taking them in their own toils.”

“ Nay,” said the governor, “ I think, since you say that you left Blas at Grazalema this night, our plan has already succeeded without your assistance. By to-morrow night the pass in his rear will be occupied by a body of troops moved up from Cadiz ; and our arrangements are made to give him a warm reception, should he attempt to escape on this side.”

“ And now, Señor,” added the secretary, “ since his excellency has thought fit to make you acquainted with so much of our plans, I believe you must remain our prisoner, until they have been fully carried into execution.”

“ That will be as his excellency pleases,” I replied. “ But I have yet a communication to make that may induce you to view the matter differently. Blas Maldonado left Grazalema this night; he sleeps at Gaucin, and from thence, in conjunction with the band of this very Beltran, is to attack your fortress as soon as ever you have been induced to move upon Grazalema, and thus”

An orderly here entered the room, and delivered a packet to the governor. It was short, and seemed to confound him. He handed it to his secretary without a word of comment, who also seemed perplexed.

After another whispered consultation, the governor turned to me and said, “ Your information is correct—Blas is now at Gaucin. Leboucher, reseal that letter, and carry it to the worthy Señor Beltran, and ask him if it contains any thing to be communicated to me. Say we have imprisoned Jacobo as he recommended.”

In a few minutes the secretary returned, and stated that Beltran, having perused the letter, was desirous of departing immediately, as he feared something had gone wrong—that Jacobo (meaning me) must on no account be lost sight of.

“ His impudence shall not save him,” exclaimed the governor; “ I’ll have him before me this instant, and”

“ *Mon General*,” I interrupted, “ reap yourself the fruit of his perfidy ; affect to place perfect reliance in him — allow him to depart, and I pledge you my word, before eight and forty hours are passed, you shall have *his ears*, if not the head of *Blas el Ratonero*.”

My real earnestness and assumed frankness, the opportune arrival of the traitor Pépé’s despatch to Beltran, announcing my sudden departure for Gaucin (for no one *but* Pépé knew I was going there), and, lastly, Beltran’s anxiety to get away, caused the general, and even Monsieur Leboucher, to place perfect confidence in me, and the rest of the night was passed in arranging a plan to circumvent Beltran ; a plan, which, offering no great risks, (for my object now was rather to be revenged on my traitorous associates than to occasion loss to the French) was readily adopted, and before dawn I had left the town to perform my part in the drama ; Beltran having been suffered to depart some hours previously.

CHAPTER XVI.

BLAS EL GUERRILLERO — *continued.*

EVERY thing, thus far, had succeeded to the utmost of my wishes. I had now but to frame an excuse to Beltran for my unexpected visit to his quarters, and for my delay in reaching them; lull his suspicions; and wreak my vengeance upon him and his accomplices.

A good horse had been provided for me, and I soon reached Gaucin. I found Alonzo and Beltran in deep consultation: the former was much surprised and pleased at my unexpected visit; the latter pretended to be so.

Having expressed their hopes that nothing had happened to thwart our projected plans, and assured me that every thing on their parts was going on prosperously, Alonzo asked me jokingly what had occasioned my unlooked for visit, for he thought I had merely come to see his sister.

I told him (keeping my eye upon Beltran all the time) I had received information that a force had been moved from the French camp before Cadiz, towards the mountains, as if for the purpose of reopening the communication with Ronda, which had been closed by the recent capture of Grazalema ; and I had, therefore, come to say, that either I must abandon that post, and consequently our concerted project, (since I should find myself between two fires,) or, that we must carry our plans into execution without further delay.

Beltran looked very blank ; and to my proposal of proceeding to work immediately, stammered out some objection about want of time. But this Alonzo overruled,—observing that his brother Melchor and myself were the two who would feel inconvenience on that score, since our bands were the most distant from the field of action ; and as Melchor was then at Gaucin,—having, Alonzo observed to me, arrived unexpectedly, “as if sent by Providence,” the preceding night,—the whole affair might be at once settled.

Accordingly, a messenger was despatched for his brother ; whilst waiting for whom, I took the opportunity of stating that I had met with an accident on the road, which had retarded me considerably ; having, I said, in consequence of the fall of my mule soon after leaving Graza-

lema, been obliged to proceed to Cortes on foot, and, arriving there in the dead of the night, had experienced great delay in procuring a horse.

Beltran's countenance brightened on hearing this little explanation, and he then, with affected carelessness, asked after his old friend Jacobo. I replied, that I had left him quite well at Grazalema; a piece of information that seemed to puzzle him amazingly.

Melchor did not keep us long waiting, and our final dispositions were soon made. It was settled that he should proceed with all speed to join his band at El Burgo, and at daybreak on the following morning make the projected foray into the eastern part of the vale of Ronda, to draw upon him a portion of the garrison of the fortress. Beltran, meanwhile, was to march immediately with his troop, (which was already assembled at Gaucin) and gain the valley of the Guadiaro below Montejaque; whilst I should post back to Grazalema, to conduct my *quadrilla* to the pass in the chain of Sierra to the left of that same village. Our two bands would thus be so situated as to be able to form a junction, and fall upon the defenceless city, the moment the favourable opportunity presented itself.

Although, as chieftain of the largest band, the direction of the operations devolved upon me, yet, out of compliment to Beltran, I invited

him to meet me at the village of Montejaque, as soon as he had conducted his troop to its assigned position ; whence we could watch the movements of the enemy in the plain below, and put the necessary "*ensemble*" in our movements. I then remounted my horse, and lost no time in rejoining my band.

My first care, on regaining Grazalema, was to send for Pépé. The scoundrel confessed every thing. Beltran, Melchor, and himself, had entered into a plot to betray me into the hands of the French. Alonzo, he declared, knew nothing of it. A French force was, that very night, to occupy the narrow pass between the lofty Sierras of Endrinal and San Cristoval, in our rear, to intercept me, when — on discovering that our plan to entrap the enemy had failed — I should attempt to escape by that issue to Ubrique.

Alarmed at my sudden determination to visit my coadjutors at Gaucin, and yet more at the hint I had thrown out of the possible disarrangement of our plans, Pépé rightly conjectured that I had received some hint of impending danger, and had despatched a hurried epistle to Beltran, (who, he knew, was then at Ronda, making final arrangements with the enemy,) acquainting him with my proceedings. My *faithful* Pépé furnished me, moreover, with a list of six of my own men, who were engaged in the plot. It

was, however, with the greatest difficulty I brought him to confess what had moved him to engage in this treacherous plot ; the more unpardonable on his part, since, in all our intercourse, he had received nothing but benefits at my hands. At length, he acknowledged that he had been worked upon by that strongest and strangest of all human passions, *jealousy*—that uncontrollable phrenzy, which, of all our weaknesses, is the only one that fails not with our declining years, and that—strange to say—ofttimes causes the very feeling, the suspicion alone of which gave it birth !

Such was the case in the present instance. The wife of Pépé was a dark *Gitana*,* in the full bloom of woman's beauty ; and, with a form as graceful, and passions as unrestrained, as those of the wild deer that bounded through her native forests, she possessed, as I soon discovered, a spirit that ill assorted with the clownish and imbecile character of her husband.

The source whence the mysterious warning sprung was now evident ; but, until that moment, I had not even been aware that Pépé's wife had accompanied him to Grazalema.

I solemnly protested to him that I had never looked upon *Paca* with the eyes of love, and that his jealousy was, consequently, quite unfounded—a declaration which, at that time,

* Gipsy.

was not more solemn than true ; and Pépé's jealousy ceased precisely at the moment when cause for it commenced.

For his unreserved confession of the plot I granted the wretch his life on one condition ; a condition which I will hereafter specify, and to the performance of which he bound himself in the most solemn manner. I knew him sufficiently to trust to his superstition, what I no longer could to his honour.

Without taking any further notice of this conspiracy, I assembled my troop, and, towards nightfall, put it in motion for its allotted position ; which we reached towards midnight. I now sent for Jacobo, and, communicating to him my secret, directed him to proceed on, whilst yet the shadows of night would conceal his movements, towards Ronda, and, with the earliest dawn, to make the demonstration *I* had arranged with the French Governor of the fortress. This done, I proceeded myself to Montejaque, to give the meeting to my confederate Beltran.

He came about an hour before day-break, armed up to the teeth, but was evidently very nervous and uneasy, which I remarked to him, and asked, jestingly, if he had a presentiment of death. He affected to laugh too, but his teeth chattered in the vain attempt ; and, to take off my attention, he remarked that it was

time we should be on the alert. We accordingly left the village, which is nestled between two cragged peaks, that protrude from the mountain like the tusks of a *javali*,* and, ascending to the summit of the northernmost pinnacle, stationed ourselves on the look out.

The sun had not yet risen above the eastern mountains ere we heard some distant straggling shots. "That firing must be the skirmishing of Melchor's party," observed Beltran; "had we not better move on?"

"Our attack would be premature," I replied; "Let him draw the garrison off some distance further, and then we shall . . . *Valga mi Dios!* the sounds appear to come nearer! there must indeed be some treason here!"

"Treason!" he exclaimed, shuddering.

"Ay, treason, *Carajo!*" I repeated. "See! do you not distinguish the blue jackets of the French dragoons!"

By this time a slight mist, which hung over the course of the Guadiaro, had gradually dispersed under the influence of the rising sun, and we were enabled distinctly to perceive Jacobo's party, scattered amongst the olive groves, retiring slowly before a detachment of about equal strength of French dragoons. At the same moment we heard the distant roar of artillery; and *Beltran*, starting back from the edge of the precipice, exclaimed, "There is

* Wild boar.

indeed, treason somewhere; I shall forthwith rejoin my band, and there await your orders."

"Do so," I replied quickly; "but the way through the village is circuitous. Here, Pépé—Andres,—show my good friend Beltran a shorter way down to the river:—but let me have his ears first."

At my first word, Pépé and another stout fellow, darting from behind a rock, seized Beltran by the arms, and, holding the traitor whilst I robbed him of his ears, then pitched him headlong down the precipice.

I now hastened to my troop. Jacobo and his party had by this time reached the spot where the Guadiaro, leaving the fertile basin of Ronda, enters a narrow, tortuous valley; and, crossing to the right bank, kept down the stream; thereby passing along the front of my position, and drawing the enemy on towards the spot where Beltran's troop was posted.

The enemy imprudently suffered themselves to be enticed into the trap thus laid for them, and, when sufficiently advanced for my purpose, I rushed down the side of the mountain, cutting off their retreat by the road along the edge of the river, whilst, at the same moment, Jacobo's detachment, reinforced by the whole of Beltran's band, attacked them vigorously in front.

They did not attempt to resist such fearful odds, but, plunging into the stream, endea-

voured to escape amongst the vineyards that clothe the rough hills bordering its left bank. Few, however, escaped. One prisoner only (according to my orders) was made. He happened to be the very corporal who commanded the piquet which had stopt me on going into Ronda two nights before.

I congratulated him on his lucky escape. "Your saint takes good care of you," said I, "to throw you into the hands of so generous an enemy. You threatened to handcuff *me*—now I am about to liberate *you*. You must, however, be the bearer of some more *important disclosures*, which I have to communicate to your governor. They are contained in this letter and parcel;—as you value your life, deliver them safely." I then sent him about his business.

The letter was as follows:—

"*Mon General,*

"When recently honoured with an interview, I pledged my word that, within eight-and-forty hours, your excellency should have the ears of Beltran Galindiz, *if not* the head of Blas El Ratonero.

"In performance of this promise, I herewith send the *former*; for I find that I have still further occasion for the services of the *latter*.

"Pray assure Monsieur Lavater (your sagacious secretary) of the high consideration in which I hold his extraordinary penetration; and, for yourself, accept the assurance of my earnest desire, that one so talented "may live a thousand years," to command the forces opposed to

"BLAS MALDONADO."

I will not weary you, *Caballeros*, with any further account of my military adventures, except to tell you that some eighteen months after this affair, whilst pursuing the enemy on his retreat from before Cadiz, a French officer was captured by my troop, and brought up for judgment.

“Monsieur,” said he, addressing me in his native tongue, and not without some little surprise in his countenance, “*il me paraît que votre figure me revient.*”

“Very likely, *Monsieur Leboucher*,” I replied in Spanish; “probably you again recognise *Blas el Ratonero*, and have come for your reward. Here, *compañeros*,” I continued, addressing my attendants; “pay this worthy gentleman the thousand crowns reward due to his penetration. Let them be put up in a bag, the bag tied to his heels, and he by the neck to the next tree.”

“Savage!—Monster!”—exclaimed my old acquaintance, as my orders were carrying into execution; “order your ruffians at all events to shoot me, that I may die like a French soldier.”

“You are a bold fellow,” said I, “to beard the tiger in his lair; and I like a brave fellow although an enemy; so get ye gone, and read a lesson on humanity to your generals, for many of them stand much in need of it.”

He thanked me like a brave man, without expressing such extravagant gratitude as his

nation is wont to do ; and I felt an inward satisfaction at having spared him. Nevertheless, I had my reasons for it, be assured ; for, since the Ronda affair, I knew not what dependence to place on my fellows, and thought I might perchance have need, some time or other, of a friend in the enemy's camp.

I must now, *caballeros*, hurry on to the conclusion of my tale ; for though the day is not yet dawning, the cocks are giving notice of its approach, and, like yourselves, I purpose being on horseback by sunrise.

The true manner of Beltran's death was never known, and his corpse was left to furnish a meal to the vultures. I knew I could depend on the secrecy of my Montejaque bravo, Andres ; and Pépé swore that he had seen Beltran fall dead from his horse, whilst attempting to rejoin his troop after leaving me. Not the slightest suspicion, therefore, fell upon me.

It was some years, however, ere Engracia could be persuaded to become my wife. She has since told me that it was her brother Melchor who always dissuaded her from it ; but he was killed in a skirmish with the French in the Pyrenees, and her brother Alonzo never recovered from the *Tertiana* that laid him up at Gaucin.

Paca, on her side, opposed my marriage, with all her most impassioned rhetoric ; but its in-

fluence was no longer felt, and our intimacy broke off with a violent explosion. I have never seen her since, but understand she absconded from her disconsolate Pépé soon afterwards.

On the termination of our glorious war of independence, and the elevation of Ferdinand the Seventh to the constitutional throne, as established by the National Cortes, in 1812, I proceeded to Madrid to swear allegiance to the sovereign for whose return I had fought and bled, and claim the reward of my long services. But instead of surrounding himself with the valiant chieftains who had driven the vile *gavachos* across the Pyrenees, and placed the crown of the two worlds upon his head, the imbecile monarch had hedged himself round with the same impotent old grandes, intriguing priests, and other parasites and *bribones*, who, but for the in-born valour of the Spanish *people*, would have been now fawning with the same abject *servilism* at the feet of the usurper Josef. At length, however, by dint of perseverance, I obtained an audience. The king received me in his usual graceless, gracious manner — regretted my wounds—presented me with a cigar—referred me to his ministers—and wished me good morning.

His ministers—true jacks in office—had the impudence to tell me, that my services, like those of the *Empecinado*, and so many other

gallant *guerrilla* chieftains, amounted to little more than highway robberies, and that my proper reward, if I had it, would be the gallows.

Was it astonishing, *caballeros*, that such black ingratitude should meet with a heavy punishment? The favourable opportunity for inflicting it did not, however, as you know, occur for several years. But the mine which was for ever to lay the throne of absolutism prostrate, was preparing, and at length the explosion took place. I need not tell you that I was amongst the first to declare for the constitution, and my patriotism was rewarded by the lucrative post I now hold. The miserable serviles and *anilleros** are still contriving plots to subvert the glorious fabric we liberals have raised. But they will find us too strong for them; and the vigour we shall exhibit will effectually deter the French from effecting their long talked of intervention. Indeed, as our old Spanish *refran* says, “*Olla que mucho hierve, mucho pierde*,”† and I suspect they will find their army assembling to watch Spain, fritter away by desertion, until nothing but its well-paid *Etát-Major* remains.‡

Pues! § Señores, added our *hero*, after a

* The *moderates* were distinguished by wearing a ring—whence the term.

† An olla that boils long loses much.

‡ This was the general opinion amongst the Spanish *liberales*.

§ “*Well then*”—a conjunctional expression with which, and sundry *conques* (with which), a Spaniard takes up and links together the dif-

short pause; I have now related all the most remarkable events of my eventful life. You must, I think, admit that I have had much to contend against in raising myself to my present prosperous condition, and that what little *pecadillos* I have committed were—if not purely accidental—forced upon me by uncontrollable circumstances. *Conque, amigos!—le beso las manos.* I will now leave you for a few moments to see to the feeding of my horse, who has a long journey before him, and I will take the opportunity of desiring our hostess to prepare us some chocolate. *Si se ofrecece algo ustedes no tienen que mandar,** and if you can be persuaded at any future time to visit ——, be assured, *mi casa, mi muger, mis criados—todo está a lá disposicion de ustedes.†*

With this most liberal invitation, Señor Blas left us.

ferent portions of a *cuenta*, the narration of which is generally interrupted by the necessity for lighting a fresh cigar, striking a fresh light, or getting rid of a superabundant supply of smoke. I have been purposely chary of these expressions, not to prolong a story which, even without them, many may think is somewhat tediously spun out.

* Which may be thus literally translated (*si se ofrecece algo*) if any thing occurs, (. . . .) a hiatus that is filled up with a shrug of the shoulders; an expansion of the hands, palms outwards, and corresponding contortion of the muscles of the cheeks; all of which, like Lord Burleigh's shake of the head, has a wonderfully comprehensive meaning—viz., in which I can in any way serve you, (*ustedes no tienen que mandar,*) you have but to give me your orders.

† My house, my wife, my servants—every thing I possess is at your disposal.

CHAPTER XVII.

CORDOBA—BRIDGE OVER THE GUADALQUIVIR—MILLS—QUAY—SPANISH PROJECTS—FOUNDATION OF THE CITY—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WESTERN CALIPHAT—CAPTURE OF CORDOBA BY SAN FERNANDO—THE MEZQUITA—BISHOP'S PALACE—MARKET PLACE—GRAND RELIGIOUS PROCESSION—ANECDOTE OF THE LATE BISHOP OF MÁLAGA AND THE TRAGALA.

THE grandeur of Cordoba, like the effect of stage scenery, ceases on a near inspection. The city, as has already been noticed, stands in the midst of a vast plain, bounded by ranges of distant mountains; but, on entering within the gates, the prospect of the smiling valley and darkly wooded sierras is altogether excluded, and, in exchange, the traveller finds his view confined to the white-washed walls of the low and poverty-stricken houses that line the narrow, crooked, jagged streets of the once proud capital of the Abdalrahmans.

From the painful glare of this displeasing contrast, the eye in vain seeks relief by turn-

ing towards the winding Guadalquivír; for, the bridge once passed, not a glimpse of its dark blue current can be obtained from any part of the city.

There is a suburb of some extent on the southern bank of the river; but the city, properly so called, is altogether situated on the opposite side. An old Saracenic castle, modernised and kept in a defensible state, interdicts the approach to the bridge, which edifice is also a work of the Moors. It is a solid structure of sixteen irregular arches, 23 feet in width, and 860 in length. Its erection is usually attributed to the Caliph Hassim (son of the first Abdalrahman), towards the close of the eighth century; and, according to Florez, that enlightened sovereign was himself the planner and director of the work. I can see no reason to doubt this respectable authority, although some English writers have stated the bridge to be of Roman construction. It is very possible that the present edifice may have been raised on an old foundation, though the bridge built by the Romans is generally supposed to have been higher up the river.

The summer stream of the Guadalquivír scarcely warrants its being distinguished by so grandiose a name as the *Great River—Guad-al Kibeer*, for its volume of water is but small, and, from being led off into numerous irrigating

conduits and mill-races, is reduced to so inconsiderable a current that, during nine months of the year, the greater part of the river's wide sandy bed is left perfectly dry.

Some of the mills "below bridge" are Moorish, and very picturesque; as are also the crenated, ivy-clustered towers of the city walls overhanging the river. On the right bank of the stream, above the bridge, a handsome quay is (1833) constructing; but, as the "great river" is navigable only for small boats, the sum expended on this costly work appears to be an absolute waste of money, which ought rather to have been laid out in sinking a channel, so as to render the river practicable for barges and trading vessels down to Seville. If this were done—and it was effected to a certain extent by the French, during their occupation of the country from 1810 to 1812—a quay would soon be constructed from the profits arising from the increased commerce of the place. But the Spaniards generally begin things at the wrong end, and in this, as well as most of their projects, they might derive great advantage from the study of Mrs. Glasse's well known recipe for making hare soup, beginning, "first catch a hare."

The precise date of the foundation of Cordoba is unknown. By Strabo, who calls it the first colony of Roman citizens established in Boetica,

it is attributed to Marcellus, but which individual of that name is meant it would be difficult to determine. It must, however, have been founded very soon after the Romans obtained possession of Spain, since the city is mentioned by Appian in the war of Viriatus, as well as by Polybius in the expedition of Marcus Claudius against the Lusitanians. We may suppose, therefore, that it was built by the Romans, to secure their dominion over the country on the expulsion of the Carthaginians, that is, about 200 years before the Christian era.

By Hirtius, Cordoba is spoken of as the capital of the country at the period of Julius Cæsar's second visit to Spain; and, from that time, it seems ever to have been a rich and powerful city, and the residence of many noble Roman families. But the most glorious epoch in the annals of Cordoba dates from the arrival of the renowned Abdalrahman, sole surviving male descendant of Mohammed in the Ommiad line, who, being forced to seek shelter from the enemies of his race in the deserts of Africa, was called over to Spain, became sovereign of the country, and, fixing his residence at Cordoba, assumed the title of Caliph of the West, A.D. 755.

Abdalrahman repaired, strengthened, and extended the walls with which the Romans had already encircled the city; built a splendid

palace, and commenced the celebrated mosque; and, during his long reign, so firmly did he establish his sway over the rest of Spain, as even to force a tribute from the hardy descendants of Pelayo, entrenched within the wild recesses of the Asturian mountains.

The western caliphs continued to exercise great power for upwards of two centuries, and, indeed, the prosperity of Cordoba was at its acmé during the reign of Abdalrahman III., who flourished in the middle of the tenth century. The days of its glory ceased, however, with the life of Mohammed Almanzor, the celebrated vizier of the weak Hassim II., A.D. 998; and, not long afterwards, the caliphat of Cordoba finished, and several small kingdoms were founded on its ruins.

The kingdom of Cordoba, in its diminished and enfeebled state, continued to exist until A.D. 1236, when its proud capital fell an easy conquest to Ferdinand III. of Castile, who, to merit the saintly title which Spanish history has conferred upon him, drove the turbaned inhabitants from their homes, and rendered the beautiful city a wilderness of brick and mortar.

Cordoba never recovered the effects of this cruel and impolitic act; and its population, which, during the caliphat, is reputed to have amounted to upwards of a million of souls, at no after period reached a tenth, and can now,

at the utmost, be estimated at a twentieth part of that number.

The circumvallation of the city is still very perfect, and embraces a considerable space ; but many parts of the enclosure are not built upon, and the houses generally are low and but thinly inhabited. The once flourishing trade of the place is now confined to some trifling manufactures of leather, called *Cordovan*, which ill deserves the celebrity it even yet enjoys.

We took up our abode at the Posada *del Sol*, than which a more wretched place of accommodation, either for man or beast, the sun never shone upon. Nevertheless, it was represented to us as being (and I believe at that time was) the only eligible lodgment for *Hidalgos* which the city contained.* One advantage it did hold out, however, namely, that of being immediately in front of the great and only *lion* of the place, the famed cathedral, or *Mezquita*, as it still continues to be called.

This remarkable pile has evidently been raised upon the ruins of some gothic edifice, which again is generally supposed to have stood upon the site of a yet more ancient Roman temple of Janus.

The *Mezquita*, in fact, may be said to be made up of the reliques of those two nations,

* A much better, indeed a very good inn, has since been established. See chapter 2, vol. ii.

its architecture alone being Moorish. It was finished by Hassim (son of Abdalrahman, its founder), towards the close of the eighth century; but subsequent caliphs made great additions to it.

The exterior of the building is extremely gloomy and unprepossessing; its dark and windowless walls, and low engrailed parapets, giving it the appearance of a prison, rather than of a place of worship. The horse-shoe arches over the doors are nevertheless well worthy of notice, and the principal gate is covered with bronze plates of most exquisite workmanship. Of the four and twenty entrances that formerly gave admission to the holy shrine of the prophet's descendant, but five are now open, which may in some degree account for the gloom that pervades the interior.

Never did the feeling of astonishment so completely take possession of my senses, as on first entering this most extraordinary edifice. You step at once from the hot and sun-bleached street into a cool and sombre enclosure, of vast extent, which has not inaptly been likened to a forest of marble pillars; and, indeed, to carry out the simile, the arches, springing in all directions from these polished stems, present a vaulted covering which, at first sight, appears as complicated in its construction, as even a

forest canopy of nature's own formation. One soon discovers, however, that the thickly planted pillars are aligned so as to divide the dark interior into regular avenues or aisles, and that the arches springing from and connecting each column with the four adjacent pillars (thus spanning both the main and transverse intercolumniations) form arcades, extending the whole length and breadth of the building. These arches are mostly of the Moorish, or horse-shoe form, but some few are of the pointed gothic, and seem to me to be the remains of a building of more ancient date than the time of the Moors.

The interior of the mosque is nearly a square, its dimensions being 394 English feet from east to west, and 356 from north to south. But on attentive examination it becomes evident that the side which, correctly speaking, must now be considered the width of the mosque, was originally its length, an addition having been made on its eastern side, which has given it greater extent in that direction than in the other, so that its original interior dimensions were 356 feet from north to south (the same as at present), but only 240 feet from east to west.

This space was divided by ten lines of columns into eleven aisles, extending north and south through the building; the centre avenue, which was directed straight from the great

gate of entrance to the *Maksurah*, or sanctuary, situated in the middle of the south wall of the mosque, being (as it continues to this day) two feet wider than the others. Each of these ten rows contained thirty-one columns, placed about ten feet apart, from centre to centre; but they did not extend the whole length of the building, a small space at the south end being partitioned off for the apartments of the Imans.

By the addition which was afterwards made to the Mosque, (doubtless rendered necessary by the increasing veneration with which it came to be regarded) it gained 154 feet in width, and eight aisles were added to the eleven already formed; and, as no part of this was reserved, it required thirty-four columns in each row to fill up the space. These, however, were not *throughout* placed so as to align transversely with those of the original portion of the building; which circumstance has probably occasioned the discrepancies observable in the accounts given of this singular building by different writers. Swinburne, whose descriptions are generally very accurate, has fallen into error by stating that the mosque was divided into but seventeen aisles, having apparently overlooked the fact, that an avenue on each side has been taken off since it became a Christian church, for the erection of chapels dedicated to the divers saints of the Cordoban Calendar.

The mosque may, therefore, be considered as having formerly been divided longitudinally into nineteen principal aisles or avenues of columns, and transversely into thirty-five. But it is to be observed that the line of columns which marks the division between the old and modern parts of the building differs from the rest; being rather a series of clusters of pillars (four in each pier), than isolated columns: and two similar lines divide the interior also, transversely; so that in making a calculation of the number of columns it formerly contained, these must be duly taken into the account; and it will then be found that the total number did not fall far short of the thousand it is rumoured to have contained.

Although, as I have observed, the cross alignments of the columns in the old and new portions of the building do not exactly correspond, yet in some parts of the interior the arrangement of them is so perfect, that the spectator looks down eight avenues from the spot where he stands; four being at right angles with the walls of the building, the other four bisecting these, and extending diagonally across the mosque.

The columns are of polished jasper, marble porphyry, and granite, and offer as much variety in their architectural as in their geological character; some rising doric-like from the

pavement, others resting on low bases ; many swelling in the shaft in the early style of the Egyptians, and some few ascending spirally, bespeaking the vitiated taste of the middle ages. Many are capped with Corinthian, others with grotesque, and some with purely Gothic, capitals.

All these varieties of colour, shape, and ornament, have, after a time, a displeasing effect ; but on first entering the building the spectator's attention is so riveted by the novelty of its character, and the vastness of its dimensions, that these violations of the prescribed rules of taste are overlooked.

The columns, which are mostly eighteen inches in diameter, rise only nine feet above the pavement ; and even with the additional height of their capitals, and of the arches springing from them, the roof is elevated but thirty-five feet above the floor ; a height totally disproportioned to the extent of the building. On advancing further into the interior, however, this defect is less conspicuous ; for the roof is found to be there raised in a singular manner — in steps, as it were — by a second series of horse-shoe arches, that spring from square pillars raised on the columns which support the lower arches ; and thus — the space between the two series of arches being left open—forming a kind of double arcade, of a peculiarly light and fanciful kind.

In different parts of these raised portions of the roof, small cupolas are erected, which admit the only light that the interior receives. The distribution of light is, consequently, very unequal. But the effect produced is remarkably well suited to the character of the building ; as the partial gleams of sunshine thus scattered throughout the complicated architecture of the roof, by gradually diminishing in strength as the long lines of columns recede from view, leaves them at last in a distant gloom, which makes the avenues appear interminable.

The appearance of the interior is much spoilt by the erection of an enormous Gothic choir, in the very centre of the building ; for it intercepts the view of nearly one half the columns, (the long vistas between which constitute the great beauty and wonder of the place) and offers nothing to compensate for the injury thus inflicted but some carved wood-work, representing subjects taken from the Scriptures, executed by one Pedro Cornejo. The life of the artist is said to have been miraculously preserved until the very day on which he had completed his pious undertaking. This Gothic pile was erected so late as the time of Charles the Fifth, who seems to have taken a pleasure in disfiguring every thing Moorish that his predecessors had not laid their intolerant hands upon.

When in its pristine state, despite all its sins

against good taste, the interior of the *Mezquita* must have presented a superb *coup d'œil*. The roof, composed of wood, and wonderfully well put together, was richly painted and gilt ; the walls were covered with elaborate stuccoes, and the floor was paved with gaudy mosaics. But of all this splendour little now remains. The all-destroying hand of Time has long since robbed the vaulted aisles and graceful cupolas of their brilliant tints ; the not less destructive hand of Bigotry has stript the walls of their tasteful arabesques and inscriptions ; and to the fragile mosaic pavement the change from slippers to shoes has been equally fatal ; for, excepting here and there, round the foot of some column, scarcely a fragment of the bright glazed tiles with which it was originally laid can now be discovered, amidst the bricks of which it is composed, and dust with which it is covered.

From this sweeping destruction one small recess has most fortunately been preserved, to afford the means of judging what the *whole* must have been in its original state. This little compartment is situated at the south end of the mosque, near the sanctuary, and must have been included within the portion of the building set apart for the Imans. It was brought to light only in 1815, by the removal of some bookshelves and a slight brick wall, which had, probably, been put up purposely to screen it

from the eyes of the superstitious multitude, and save it from mutilation. By the Spaniards it is called the Chapel of the Moorish Kings. Within it was found a tomb, containing the sword, spurs, and bones, of one of the principal chieftains who accompanied San Fernando to the siege of Cordoba, and at whose request, we were told, this beautiful little nook has been permitted to retain its Mohammedan decorations. In lightness and elegance of design it equals any portion of the Alhambra, and from its high state of preservation may be looked upon as the best specimen of Moorish workmanship extant. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine any thing more beautiful of its kind, such is the perfection of its mosaic pavement, the sharpness of the fretwork and brilliancy of the colouring on its walls, and the dazzling splendour of the gilt stalactites pendant from its roof.

Adjoining this invaluable little casket is the *maksourah*, or, as it is called by the Spaniards, *el zancarron** (the heel-bone): a name which favours the supposition that it was the place of burial of the founder or finisher of the mosque, rather than the sanctuary of the Koran, as is generally supposed, although, indeed, it might have been both.

* *Zancarron de Mahoma* is a contemptuous way of speaking amongst Spaniards of the bones of the prophet, which the Mussulmans go to visit at Mecca.

The architecture and ornaments of this sanc-
tum differ from those of the rest of the mosque,
being even yet more complicated and richly
finished; but it is by no means in so good a
state of preservation as the recess just de-
scribed. The face of the arch that spans the
entrance of the *zancarron* is elaborately worked
in crystals of various hues, and encompassed
with moral precepts from the Koran. The in-
terior is an octagon, only fifteen feet in dia-
meter, and is domed over by a single block of
white marble, carved into the form of a scallop-
shell. Another huge slab of the same material
forms its floor.

The shrine of the caliph, descendant of the
prophet, probably occupied the centre of this
recess; round which the feet of the numberless
pilgrims who visited the holy place have
worked a groove in the hard marble. It is
situated *now* towards the south-west angle of
the building, but in the original mosque it
stood, as I have already stated, exactly in the
centre of its south wall, facing the grand en-
trance. On each side were the apartments of
the Imans; and in front, extending east and
west, across the building, a space of the width
of two intercolumniations was set apart as a
chancel or *mikrab*, wherein the officiating priests
performed their mysterious ceremonies before
the people, to whom different portions of the

rest of the building were appropriated, according to their rank in life.

At the north end of the mosque is a spacious court, encompassed on three sides by an open colonnade, and furnished with copious fountains. Here, when occasion required, the Mussulmans purified their bodies by ablutions ere entering the holy place, and, leaving their slippers under the arcades, proceeded barefoot to the shrine of Mohammed's descendant, making divers prostrations in the course of their short journey.

This court, now called the *Patio de los Naranjos*,* is the same width as the mosque, and adds 200 feet to its length; making the exterior dimensions of the building 574 (English) feet from north to south, and 416 from east to west.

From the north wall of the court rises the *campanilla*, or belfry, from the summit of which a fine view is obtained of the city. Beneath it is an archway of more recent date than the mosque, called the Gate of Mercy, through which a flight of steps leads from the street into the court. This gate faces the principal entrance into the *Mezquita*.

The cathedral is rich in silks, jewels, candlesticks, and brocades; and the altar of the chapel of Villa Viciosa is splendidly furnished.

* Court of the Orange-trees.

The sacristy contains also some tolerable paintings, said to be by Murillo, and other first-rate Spanish artists, but I doubt whether any of them are originals ; for the French, who have a nice discrimination in these matters, twice sacked the city, and were on both occasions so little expected, that the priests had barely time to carry off the plate, and reliques of the churches, to places of greater security. Besides which, the Spaniards are prone to call every black, tarnished old painting a Murillo or a Velasquez.

The bishop's palace is an immense, and rather handsome pile, standing a little removed from the cathedral, towards the river. The very face of it shows, however, that of late years the prelates have appropriated the revenues of the see to some other, perhaps more *legitimate*, though less orthodox, purpose, than that of setting their house in order, for it is in a very neglected state. The interior, which is not better looked after, exhibits, in an eminent degree, that mixture of splendour and misery so conspicuous in all things Spanish. A spacious, costly, and particularly dirty marble staircase ascends to the first floor, whereon are the state apartments ; they consist of a suite of long, narrow, whitewashed rooms, communicating one with another the whole extent of the building, and each furnished with a prodigious

number of shabby old chairs, an antediluvian sofa, and some daubs of paintings in poverty-stricken gilt frames.

The principal apartment, or *sala de la audiencia*, is hung with portraits of all the goodly persons who have worn the episcopal mitre of Cordoba, from the days of *San Damaso* (who flourished about the middle of the third century) to the present time. Some of these paintings have much merit; but, if they are *likenesses* of those for whom they were drawn, a disciple of Lavater or Spurzheim must either abandon his faith, or admit that most of the beetle-browed, low-crowned originals, deserved a gibbet rather than a bishop's cap. Nevertheless, several of these peculiarly "ill-favoured" ecclesiastics are—so our conductor solemnly assured us—now saints in heaven.

One old gentleman, who was not exalted to the episcopal see until he had attained a very advanced age, by way of giving a sarcastic reproof to his patron, had his portrait taken, with a grim figure of death placing the mitre on his head. Another painting represents death holding the mitre in one hand, whilst with the other he is directing a dart at his victim's breast; leaving us to infer, that the bishop died whilst the pope's diploma was yet on its way to him from Rome.

At the head of the bench is suspended a very

good painting, and admirable likeness, of the truly amiable Pius VII.; and over the fireplace hangs an execrable daub, but an equally striking resemblance, of the detestable Ferdinand VII.

The most noble part of the episcopal palace is the kitchen; which, whether the bishop be at his residence or not, daily furnishes food for 2000 poor persons.*

The garden is laid out with taste, and contains some rare transatlantic plants.

There is little else worth noticing in Cordoba. The king's palace is not occupied; the royal stud-house, where, in former days, the best breeds of Spanish horses were reared, is empty; the fine alameda, outside the city gates, is unfrequented; there is not a handsome street, I may almost say an edifice, in the place; and idleness, penury, and depravity, meet one at every step.

The market is held in the *Plaza Real*, or *de la Constitucion* (the name varying according to circumstances), and the houses encompassing it, like those in the market-place of Granada, are lofty, and furnished with rickety wooden galleries, that have a very picturesque *Prouty* appearance. Some of the old buildings, in the narrow Moorish streets, possess the same kind of sketchy beauty; but the houses of the other

* This was previous to the present civil war.

parts of the city seldom exceed two stories in height, from which circumstance Cordoba is, perhaps, the most sultry place in Andalusia.

The inhabitants are a diminutive race, and the most ill-looking I have seen in Spain.

During our stay at Cordoba we witnessed the grand procession of Corpus Christi, at the commencement of Lent, which is considered one of the most holy and imposing exhibitions of the Hispano-Roman church. It was a lamentably splendid sight ; for a more heterogeneous, heterodoxical mixture of bigotry and liberty, superstition and constitution, wax candles and fixed bayonets, it never fell to my lot to witness. It moved through the streets, preceded by a military band of music, which played Riego's Hymn and the *Tragala* alternately, with sacred airs and mournful dirges. This was only in keeping with the rest of the absurdities of the ceremony ; but it was a crying sin to compel the poor old bishop to parade through the streets, in his full canonicals, at a *pas de valse*.

The *Cordobeses* of all classes are held to be very religious, and particularly "*servil* ;" and this degrading exhibition was, probably, got up by the *exaltado* party, then in the ascendant, to bring the prelate and priestly office into contempt.

On my return to Gibraltar soon after witnessing this indecent ceremony, the Bishop of

Malaga, then a refugee within the walls of the British fortress, was publicly insulted by a shameless countrywoman (the *prima donna* of an operatic company then performing in the garrison), who, placing herself opposite to him whilst seated on one of the benches in the public gardens, sung the *Tragala* ;* applying most emphatically to him the word *perro* (dog), with which each verse of the constitutional ditty concludes.

The venerable prelate listened most patiently until her song was concluded, and then very composedly said, “*Gracias hija mia, muchissimas gracias* ;† in good truth, it is a bone fit only for the mouth of a *perra*.”‡

The laugh was rather against the chaste Rosina, who, I should not omit, however, to mention, received a hint, that if the bishop were favoured with any more such gratuitous proofs of her vocal powers, she would herself have a disagreeable *bone* to pick at the town-major’s office.

* “ Swallow it ;” the substance of the song being, if you do not like it (the constitution), you must swallow it, dog !

† Thanks, my daughter, many thanks.

‡ A female dog.

APPENDIX.

A.

The following brief notice of the numerous sieges and attacks, that the celebrated fortress of Gibraltar has sustained, may possess some interest in the eyes of many of my readers. It is extracted principally from Don Ignacio Lopez de Ayala's "Historia de Gibraltar," which dates the first arrival of the Saracens, and occupation of the rocky promontory by Taric ben Zaide, A.D. 710, and attributes the erection of the *Calahorra*, or castle, to Abdul Malic, A.D. 742.

The Fortress (which in early days must have comprised little more than the enceinte of the present ruined castle,) appears to have remained in the undisturbed possession of the Mussulmans for six entire centuries. But Ferdinand the Fourth, at length, breaking through the mountain barrier that defended the diminished territory of the Moors, laid siege to Algesiras, and despatched a force under Don Alonzo Perez de Guzman to

1. attack Gibraltar, which very unexpectedly fell into his hands, A.D. 1309.
2. The Moslems, under Ishmael, King of Granada, failed in an attempt to recover it in 1315.
3. It fell, however, to the powerful army brought over from Africa by Abdul Malik (Aboumelic), son of the Emperor of Fez, who thenceforth assumed the title of King of Gibraltar, 1333.

4. It was besieged the same year by King Alphonso XI.; and again, with as little success, by the same heroic monarch, 5. who died of the plague under its walls, 1349.

It now again remained in the undisputed possession of the Moslems for a considerable period, though it was wrested from the 6. hands of the King of Fez by Jusef, King of Granada, 1411.

7. The Spaniards again ineffectually attempted to possess themselves of it, under Don Henrique de Guzman, Conde de Nicbla, 1436.

8. But it was finally taken from the Moors by Alonzo de Arcos, Alcayde of Tarifa, 1462.

9. From him it was taken by Don Juan de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia, 1466.

It remained in the possession of the House of Guzman, until the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, who claimed it for the crown, but, on their demise, Don Juan de Guzman attempted again to

10. make himself master of it, 1516.
11. The town was sacked by a Turkish squadron, 1540;
12. and bombarded by the French, when affording shelter to an English fleet, 1693.

13. The fortress was captured by Sir George Rooke, 1704;
14. and besieged the same year, by a combined French and Spanish force, under the Conde de Villadarias and Monsieur de Tessé. By the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), it was ceded to England, but, immediately on the renewal of the war, was

15. besieged by the Spaniards, under the Conde de las Torres, when the lines across the isthmus were constructed, 1727.

16. The last and most celebrated siege was undertaken by the Spaniards and French in 1779, and lasted until 1783.

B.

“ Una estatua de San Josef, que por su corpulencia no se podia sacar oculta la extrajo un catolico llamado Josef Martin de Medina, colocado sobre un caballo à imitacion de una persona que lo montaba ;

la afianzó bien, la emboyó con una capa i la cubrió con una montera. Otro montado à la gurupa ayudaba à sostener al Santo, i agregándose algunos combidados para mayor confusión i disimulo salieron por la calle real sin ser descubiertos.”

Ayala, Hist. de Gibraltar.

C.

I suspect the *apes* tempted Mr. Carter to jump to the conclusion that Carteia was the Tarshish of Sacred History. Nevertheless, few places have furnished more food for conjecture than this famed city: some antiquaries, indeed, not content with Tarshish as a mere port, or even country, maintaining that the vast continent of Africa was so called; whilst others, differing *toto cælo*, imagine that the word implies the wide or open ocean!

In spite of the great authorities arrayed against the vulgar opinion, that Tarshish is the self-same city as that situated on the southern coast of Asia Minor, and known in after ages as Tarsus, I cannot but subscribe to it. The difference in character between the Hebrew and Greek languages may, not unreasonably I think, be supposed to have led to the change in the mode of spelling and pronouncing the name of the place; (which in point of fact is not greater than between Dover and Douvres,) for most Jews of the present day would still pronounce Tarsus, Tarshish; whilst modern Greeks would as certainly call Tarshish, Tarsis.

That *both* were ports of the Mediterranean sea will hardly, I think, admit of dispute; since Jonah* embarked at Joppa (Jaffa,) to proceed to Tarshish; and Tarsus was the birth-place of St. Paul,† and must have been situated on the coast, but a short distance to the northward of Antioch.

The chief difficulty in determining *what* and where Tarshish was, arises from a discrepancy in the two accounts given of the building of *Jehosaphat's* fleet, in the Books of Kings and Chronicles: the first stating, that the King of Judea “made ships

* Jonah, ch. i., v. 3.

† Acts. ch. ix., v. 11.

of Tarshish to go to *Ophir* for gold,"* which ships were destroyed at Ezion Geber on the Red Sea ; the latter, mentioning that the ships were built at Ezion Geber to " *go to Tarshish.*"†

Josephus makes the matter still more perplexing by saying, that " these ships were built to sail to *Pontus*, and the traffic cities of Thrace," but were destroyed from being so unwieldy, without mentioning *where* they were either built or destroyed ; thus differing from the account in Kings, which says they were made to go to Ophir, and, by implication, from the account in the Book of *Chronicles*, which states that they were made on the shores of the Red Sea ; since vessels to trade with Pontus and Thrace would certainly have been built at the ports of Syria.

Now it is quite evident, that *two* of these three accounts must be incorrect ; and it is more natural to conclude that the mistake originated in careless writing than from ignorance ; since, little as the Jews (being neither sailors nor travellers) may be supposed to have known of foreign countries, they could not, even with their limited knowledge of geography, have imagined that a fleet sailing from Tyre, in the Mediterranean, was destined to the *same* country as another fleet built on the shores of the Red Sea. And, if they were not destined to the *same* country, the two places to which they were proceeding would certainly have been distinguished by different names.

It is not, I think, unwarrantable therefore to suppose, that the Hebrew writers, in alluding to a fleet which all accounts agree was destroyed at the very port where it was built, may (supposing always our translations to be perfectly correct,) have fallen into a mistake in stating the *destination* of that fleet, and hence that, in the Book of *Chronicles*, Tarshish has been written for Ophir. This appears the more likely when we bear in mind that the Jews, after the destruction of Jehosaphat's fleet, do not appear to have ever again engaged in any naval enterprises, and consequently were careless, or had no opportunity, of correcting this mistake in their histories. In support of this supposition, it may

* 1st Kings, ch. xxii., v. 48.

† 2nd Chron., ch. xx., v. 36.

be further observed that, throughout the Scriptures, wherever the commodities brought by the fleets from Tarshish and Ophir are mentioned, the former is stated to have come laden with the productions of Europe and Northern Africa; whilst the latter brought only gold and precious stones, and algum trees.

On the discrepancy above pointed out—where there is evidently a mistake—is grounded, however, the hypothesis, that in early ages two cities or countries bore the name of Tarshish; for such a supposition is not at all borne out by the accounts previously given in the same Books of Kings and Chronicles of the fleets built by Solomon; it being particularly specified in *both** that that king made (or more properly, perhaps, *launched*) a navy of ships at Ezion Geber, on the Red Sea, which, piloted by Tyrian sailors, proceeded to *Ophir* for gold. The mention which is afterwards made† of Tarshish, seems merely to have been introduced to account for the vast riches of Solomon; shewing that he had other sources whence he procured gold and other valuables, besides Ophir.

A slight discrepancy of a similar kind to that already noticed occurs, however, in the two accounts, in speaking of the voyage of Solomon's fleet to Tarshish; the Book of Kings stating, that he “had at sea *a navy of Tarshish* with the navy of Hiram,” —the Book of Chronicles, that the King's ships “*went to Tarshish* with the servants of Huram.”

The difference in this case is immaterial. The probability seems to be, that Solomon built a fleet on the Red Sea to go to Ophir, because he could not otherwise procure one: but that he *hired* vessels to trade in the Mediterranean; which vessels, placed under the charge of Tyrian pilots, proceeded with his own servants (or supercargoes) to Tarshish, or Tarsus, on the coast of Cilicia, whither, once in three years, returned the fleet of that port,‡ bearing the produce of the more distant countries—Spain, Barbary, the Cassiterides, and England.

* 1st Kings, ch. ix., v. 26., and 2nd Chron., ch. viii., v. 17 and 18.

† 1st Kings, ch. x., v. 22, and 2nd Chron., ch. ix., v. 21.

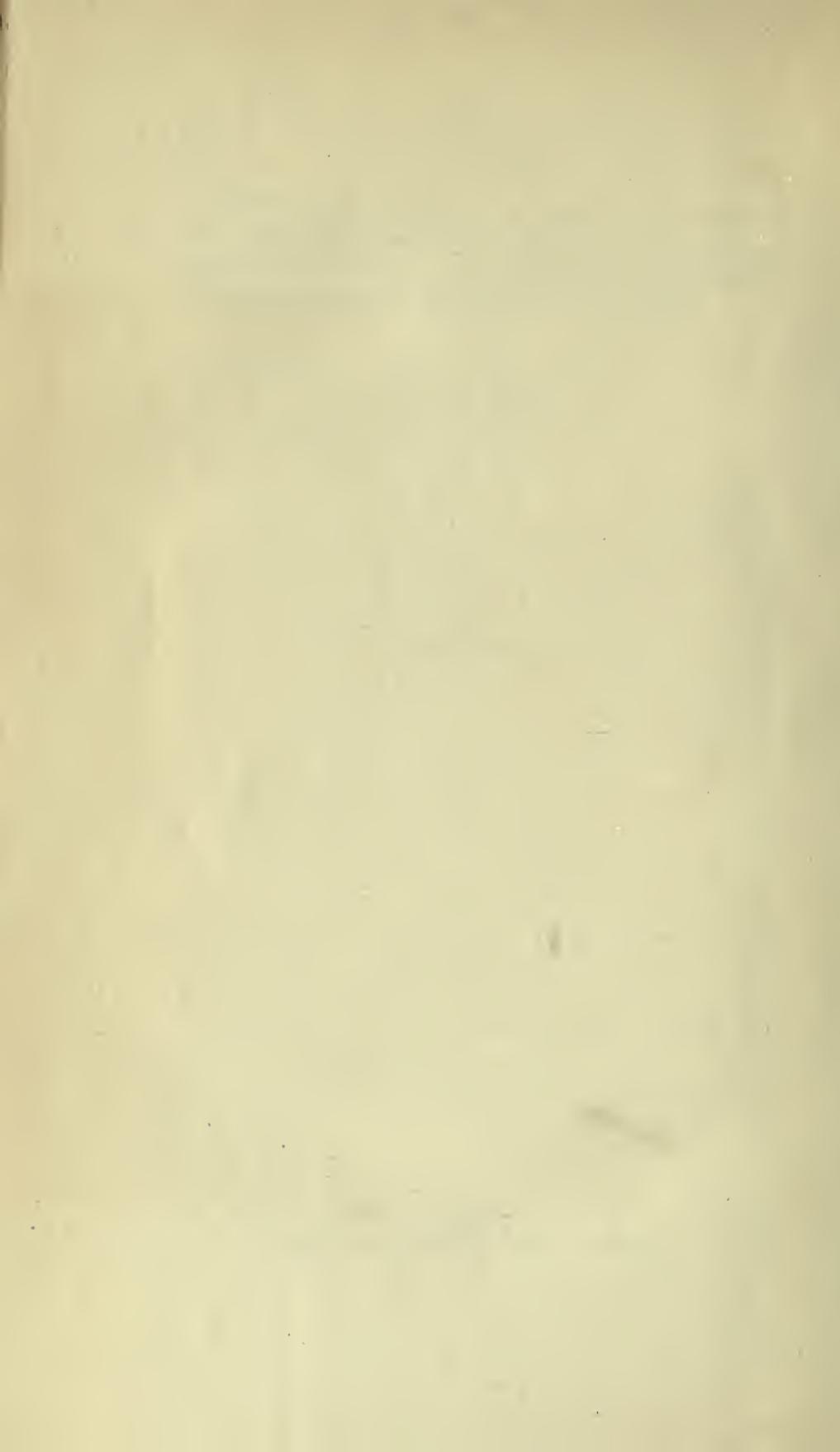
‡ Ezekiel, ch. xxvii., v. 12.

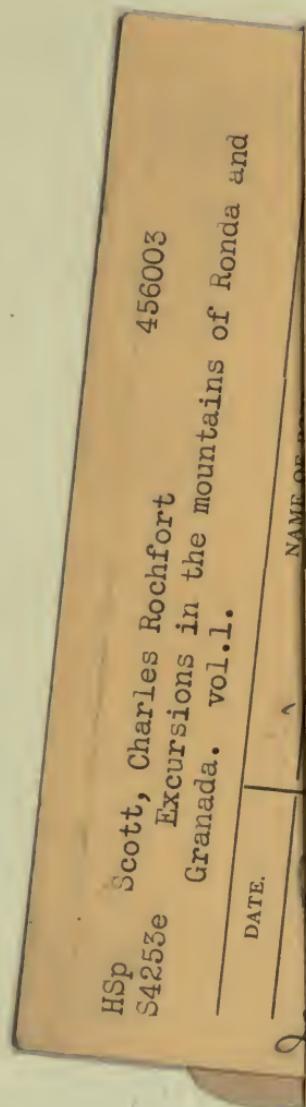
And Tarsus, we may suppose, was chosen as the entrepôt for the produce of those countries, in preference to Tyre—firstly, on account of its being a more commodious port; and, secondly, as being better situated for the inland trade of Asia Minor.

END OF VOL. I.

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